

LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION?

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No. 645.—VOL. XXV.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 11, 1875.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MOUNTING GUARD.]

THYRA DESMOND;

OR,

THE MAIDEN OF THE LAKE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Oh, there's nothing left us now
But to mourn the past.
Vain was every ardent vow,
Never yet did Heaven allow
Love so warm, so wild to last.
Not even hope could now deceive me;
Life itself looks dark and cold.

THERE had been a pause—a terrible pause—between the preparations for the unhallowed contest that was to usurp the privilege and prerogative of the Creator and Disposer of life, and the miserable and final actions that would bring the decisive result.

Both combatants probably felt that there was only a step between the present and the future world, and that the very motion of a finger was sufficient to hurl a soul to eternity.

It was a solemn thought for any human being, and perhaps especially so when there were youth and rank and wealth and love standing on the one side, and the cold hand of death, the dreary prospect of an early grave, on the other. No wonder that a chill seized on the hearts, and perhaps paled the hands of the fiery and resentful spirits that were about to drown revenge and jealousy in blood, and that as the morning sunbeams flashed on the polished pistols and gilded the leaves and the turf and the waking clouds with their glory they shrank from that unhallowed use of Heaven's blessed light which might close the eyes of one or both on its beauty for ever.

But it must be so.
Neither was prepared to say that he would draw back, that he would ignore the past, and extend to a fellow mortal the pardon which he himself hoped or from Heaven.

"Are you ready?"

The stranger in attendance held the signal

handkerchief in his hand till he heard the answer.

He watched the poisoning of the hands, the direction of the eyes, ere he gave the second repetition of:

"Are you ready?"

Then a third time the question was put and answered.

He raised the handkerchief, brandished it in the air, and then it fell on the green turf.

Simultaneously a sharp report, a ring like a heavy bell chimed, came on the ear.

Then a cry, or rather a startled groan, which proceeded more from the physical frame than any cowardly yielding to pain, and with it a heavy, dull fall on the soft turf, which seemed to shudder at its burden.

"Oh, Heaven, have I killed him? Am I a murderer?" was gasped rather than spoken by the lips of one of the young combatants.

Whose was the voice?

Whose form pressed the ground?

Whose pallid features glared in agony on the victim, even while his own blood was flowing in no measured stream from a disregarded wound?

Gaston, Lord Ashworth, groaned in agony the remorseful words.

And Charles, Lord Oranmore, lay, all white and senseless, on the ground.

"Is he dead?" came again inquiringly on the air,

"is he dead?"

Mr. Shane was kneeling by the prostrate form as Lord Ashworth spoke.

It was some minutes ere he raised his head in reply, and when he did so there was a grave foreboding in his look which spoke ominously for the answer that would follow.

"Lord Ashworth, life and death are in Heaven's hands," he said, solemnly. "There is a severe—nay, a most dangerous wound, but still I do not say it is fatal, though no doubt the chances are great, very great, against his recovery. So great," he added, "that I would entreat you to escape without delay. You are but risking another life, and in vain, by staying here."

"No, no, no!" groaned Gaston. "I will not—I cannot. What does it avail when such guilt is on my soul? I am better dead; I had better bear the punishment that I deserve."

"Well, well, it will be time enough to speak of that when the season comes," said the practical-minded doctor, with imperturbable firmness. "At present you are doing a great deal more harm than good by remaining here. I cannot take any measures for this young fellow's recovery till you are safe away and I am able to call for some help. Minutes are precious when there is the very life blood ebbing away."

"Let them come; call help; do what you like. I am ready; do not think of me," said Gaston, determinedly.

"But I do, and I intend to think of you, my young lord," returned the doctor, calmly. "I know but little of the cause of all this quarrel, but so much am I aware that Lord Oranmore was the challenger, and therefore the aggressor, and I am too well versed in these matters not to comprehend where the fault lies in these cases. Go at once; save yourself, and very probably save him in so doing. There will be plenty of time to give yourself up, if anything desperate should arise, and you are fully determined on your quixotic sacrifice."

While he spoke Dr. Shane was busily engaged in staunching and binding up the most obvious of Lord Oranmore's wounds with the materials he had at hand.

Gaston hesitated still for a moment or two, then he slowly turned to depart, and as he did so the crimson stream that was slowly trickling from his own arm attracted the surgeon's attention.

"Thunder and ager, man!" he said, angrily. "Why, you're walking into the lion's mouth by careering off in that very telltale style. Here, I won't be a minute bandaging you up, and you can say you've had a bite from a stag, if any one wants to be too curious."

He rapidly and skilfully stripped up the sleeve and wrapped a light bandage around and below the wounded place.

Then he drew from his pocket a flask that he

held out with a meaning gesture to the depressed fugitive.

"There, take a drink—no, not too much; inflammation might follow—there, that will do; be quick, and I will soon get this unlucky young fellow into a safe place. Hark—ye, you'll find a pony at the gate that will go the pace of any Arab for an hour or so. Don't spare him till you get to the station at Castle-town. Then be off as fast as steam will take you, and you'll hear in due time the result, if you take care and look in the 'Evening Mail' from day to day, wherever you are. I'll see to that."

"Heaven bless you," said Gaston, in broken accents, as he wrung the kindly doctor's hand. "I can never repay, but I'll never forget this kindness." And he hastily disappeared, leaving Dr. Shane to occupy himself undisturbed with the more desperate case before him.

The doctor certainly did not lose much time in the arrangements he had to make for his still insensible patient. He waited only till he had seen Gaston's figure vanish in the distance before he gave a low, sharp whistle that was soon obeyed by a rough but knowing-looking individual, whose brawny and powerful frame denoted as much strength as his thoroughly Hibernian features expressed as much kindness and shrewd humour.

"There, Pat, do you see?" said the doctor, pointing to the prostrate nobleman. "Can you manage to carry him to the Blackrock Street? Steady, you know, steady! I've got a room ready for him, and we'll have him in bed and set going before the morning revivifies sounds."

"Is it I that can carry him, your honour?" asked Pat, scornfully. "It's twice his weight I'd manage, only that dead men are heavy, and he's uncommonly like one just now. You see I do the thing as careful as possible as if he were an infant going to the priest to be christened." He continued, stooping down and lifting the senseless but light figure of the unlucky young nobleman in his arms with as much ease and dexterity as if he were indeed an infant whose cries would be excited by the slightest shake or discomfort in the course of the journey.

On they went, Dr. Shane walking by the side of the stalwart Pat, and holding in his hand the arm which was bent to him just the way that was in the side immediately connected with it should break out afresh. The morning was still young and fresh, and the region which they travelled was in the most fashionable quarter that was seldom peopled by any wayfarers at that early hour, so the chances of encountering any unwelcome pedestrians were extremely slight, and fortunately the entire consciousness of the danger was in his favour, so far as any risk of attracting attention or of the outburst of fresh hemorrhages was concerned, and it was diminished by the absence of all consciousness.

But as the little procession, if so it might be called, passed along the street that led from the Park to Dr. Shane's residence there was a window partially raised with quick but noiseless rapidity by female fingers, and a female's head was to be seen cautiously gazing from the aperture on the pavement below.

But it was almost impossible to distinguish features where the pallid face was half-resting on the broad breast of his bearer, or to recognise any identity in the form over which a cloak had been carefully thrown.

Lady Beatrice shivered at the idea which the sight suggested to her mind, as she drew back from her window, and proceeded to commence a hurried toilet rather for a dressing-room breakfast than with any idea of making herself presentable to any morning visitors.

Her hair was hastily twisted into careless coils that only served perhaps to display its luxuriant wealth, and wrapped again and again round her classically-shaped head, on attendant the more elaborate services of her maid, while a scarlet Cachemere peignoir enveloped her tall and graceful figure in its ample folds.

But it did not seem to shield her from the chill of the morning air as it came in through the partly opened window, for she shivered more than once with an irrefragable tremor that she could not check, though such weakness was all unusual to her proud spirit.

Who could it be? Was it connected with the sharp ring of pistol-shots that had startled her from her fitful slumbers but an hour ago?

Then came the memory of the past night, of her capricious vanity, of Gaston's proud, indignant look, as he had turned away, of the feverish triumph that had prevented her dwelling on the dangers she was incurring, of the intoxication that had turned her brain too quickly for her to look steadily on the terrible game that she was playing, and on which hearts and lives and honour and happiness were hanging on the die. She did not permit herself to indulge any self-reproach; she would not even confess that she had been wrong; she rather chose to blame the injustice of the candidates for her

favours, that they should not have submitted tamely and uncomplainingly to her caprices.

But still her heart throbbed joyfully, and her ears were stretched to catch every sound that could denote the revival of life and activity in the world around.

Solitude and silence became well nigh insupportable to her as the minutes lengthened into hours, and still no movement was to be discerned in the wretched household which had retired so late on the previous night.

At length she could bear the suspense no longer. She needed some one to speak to, and to let her hear the sound of a voice, so as to break the spell which seemed to enthrall mind and body so painfully, and which she yet told herself was so needless and absurd in its horror and its remorse.

She was about to ring for her maid in actual despair of any conquest over her excited nerves when the door opened and Tessa appeared, with mystery in her look and air, and bearing in her hand a small and carefully-folded note, which she hastily placed on the table before her young mistress.

"It is from Lord Ashworth," she said, doubtfully. "His man brought it just now, and said the earl had left town this morning, and bade him deliver this and some other letters as soon as possible; and I thought I heard you were, my lady, so I would not wait any longer, though, of course, I thought you would be very tired, and I should not have disturbed you so soon in any other case, my lady."

Beatrice bowed her head mechanically, and proceeded to open the letter, though her fingers almost refused their office.

"Go! I will rise for you directly. I will have breakfast in my dressing-room," she said, with constrained calmness, and Tessa was reluctantly obliged to obey.

No sooner had Tessa closed the door than Lady Beatrice completed the page which was to bring her either the bitterest pain or the greatest relief to the misgivings that had haunted her.

The lines were but few in number, but pregnant, as she knew well, with tidings such as whole volumes could scarcely have expressed more forcibly—tidings for her of happiness, or death and weal.

"They run thus:—
"Beatrice, I am going away, and perhaps for ever. I cannot live with the sense of blood on my hands, and I consent to fly from justice, it is more for the sake of others than my own. I do not reproach you. There will be sufficient punishment for you in the future for the thoughtless acquiescence that has caused such calamities."

The death of one, the lasting ruin and misery of another of the unfortunates whom you trifled with for your woman's vanity will be enough to pierce your heart, if it is not too callous for any words of mine to avail. I write in bitterness of spirit, not in anger. There are seasons when the weight of sorrow is too crushing for mere passion to appease itself.

Lady Beatrice pushed back the hair from her brow with a bewildered, stunned feeling, as if a severe blow had been dealt on her brain.

What did it mean? Alas! A few minutes' thought did but too plainly explain the truth.

Gaston and Lord Ormsmore had met, and the wounded, senseless figure whom she had seen carried past so recently was that of the victim of the unhallooed fight.

Was it a corpse who had been thus borne from the drearful scene, and passed her very window as if in ghastly reproach for her thoughtlessness and pride?

Alas! Beatrice could scarcely take such a flattering notion to her soul, that the mischief was indeed from mere thoughtless ignorance and vanity on her part.

It was a deliberate and haughty resolve that she would assert her own proud claims, and that Gaston should be convinced how nearly he had risked the loss of her fortune and herself by the very rivalry for her hand.

How different the aspect of the scene was now—one sufferer fugitive; his supposed rival a dead or dying man.

Yet Beatrice clung rather cravenly than softened, indignant than penitent, at the woe which had fallen on her own and her kinsman's head.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"It is dark, very dark, and yet he does not come. He promised me, and it is ill-luck to break faith with the dying," said a hollow but yet distinct voice, proceeding from a low pallet bed, in a small cottage bordering on the calm and peaceful river Tolka, and under the very shadow, as it were, of the manor that forms the principal feature of the little village of Blanchardstown.

The sufferer was a thin, wasted man of some sixty or more years of age, to judge from his thin, whitened hair and the sunken eyes and mouth, that

told the tale alike of pain and sickness in the ravages thus made on the features that had once been strong and prominent in earlier and more healthful years.

And the person addressed, who was in gracious and kind attendance on him in this hour of sore and urgent need, was a gentle, placid-looking female in the sombre garb of a "Sister of Mercy," and who belonged to the convent close beside the humble house of the dying man.

She lent soothingly over him as she replied:

"Hush! you must have patience, my good Herbert; you cannot tell what may have happened to delay your kind friend he will come soon doubtless—as you say, it would be a fearful breach of faith to break any promise to the dying. It is wrong, very wrong, my good man, quite as wrong to be faithless and uncharitable, remember, as to betray any want of punctuality in word or deed—only that you are weak and suffering, poor Herbert!" And the kindly sister bathed the fevered brow and smoothed the ruffled pillow with the tenderness that bespoke at once skill and sympathy which the prostrate sufferer might not have been able to endure.

Herbert, since that was his name, was apparently but little calmed or convinced by the arguments of the nurse. His eyes were still eagerly turned to the door, straining every nerve with the vain, almost attempt to discern what his fast-dawning sight forbade him to perceive with clearness and accuracy.

Again and again he strove to rise from the pillow, and each time he sank back again in the utter prostration of approaching death. It was touching to see the despair which gradually settled on his worn features as the minutes drew on and still no sign of the approach of him he so longed to behold crossed his dimming faculties.

"My good man, surely your mind must be turned to other things of more importance than any earthly object," said the sister, after a brief pause.

"Think of Heaven, think of your approaching change, and of making your eternal peace, rather than some vain fancy for any more human being's presence at so solemn a moment."

"But that is it—that is it," he exclaimed, eagerly. "I cannot do so peace with a secret on my conscience, and it can only be told to him—only him. And he cannot not."

There was a pathetic wail in the very tone of the sufferer which spoke more powerfully than words how deep and how true was the agony the idea occasioned.

"But if it is a sin, why not confess it to your Maker? or to those who are appointed to receive such shrift, and to speak pardon and peace to the penitent?" returned the sister, gently.

"I cannot—I dare not; it must only be told to him," returned the sufferer; "if he did but know, it he could but tell, and again a groan escaped his lips as he uttered the last words."

It seemed re-echoed in the silent air, and a shadow darkened the light which was in truth pouring into the apartment, although the dying man's faculties were dimmed so as not to see its cheering beams.

But a step which accompanied those signs of an approaching arrival was more quietly and eagerly detected by him who so anxiously desired its sound.

"It is he—it is he—Master Gaston!" he said, with choking eagerness, and ere he could attempt to utter a word more the figure he so longed to see came to his bedside.

"Herbert, forgive me, I could not be here sooner; even now it is well nigh danger to my life," said the voice of Lord Ashworth, though so altered from its usual rich bell-like sound that it was little wonder if it had not been recognised even by a familiar ear.

"What is it—what has happened?" asked Herbert, faintly. "Is it not—you—no, you cannot have heard—no one knows it by myself."

And he suddenly raised himself, with a wonderful effort, till he could feast his eyes on the face he so longed to see, but if they did assuage in perusing its features the excretion was but a momentary and a dazzling flash of the flickering light of life.

"Speak," he went on, "do you know I—does that make you and I—how—stop—listen."

The words were gasped out in unnatural, rough, harsh gutturals, as if strained to an unnatural and cracked pitch, out of the power of the speaker to tone down at his pleasure.

Lord Ashworth eagerly stooped over the bed, while the sister, with an innate delicacy, drew back so as to avoid even involuntary participation in the confidence which was about to be poured out.

It did not need.

All that was to be spoken by that unfortunate man to the yet more ill-fated Gaston had no meaning that could convey its real import to any but those already in the secret of his communication.

"Hush—he did it—yes, robbed all—he was guilty—guilty—and you—do not know—"

It was all he could say. Gradually and slowly the strength of each encoative word lessened as he uttered each syllable, with agonizing attempt to make himself understood.

Then at last the voice ceased altogether, though the lips moved, and his eyes turned painfully towards the newly arrived visitor to the cottage. "Who, who? What do you mean?" exclaimed Gaston, hoarsely, his own emotion well nigh choking his words. "Hahert, Hahert, speak! What mean you? What ought I to know? who is guilty?"

It was too late. The dying man had not altogether lost consciousness, but this only made his powerlessness more distressing since his lips and his hands worked convulsively in the very impotence of despair.

"He is dying. Do not disturb his last moments by any useless, unhalloved curiosity," interposed the sister, solemnly. "It is of no avail; he will never speak again, and it were blasphemy to torture him with earthly questionings. Let us rather pray for his departing soul."

"Yes, yes; but it may be of importance, such as you in your happy seclusion cannot even comprehend," said the young nobleman, impatiently. "Perhaps he may rally; perhaps some more intelligible words may escape him. Let us wait and listen patiently."

But the sister did not heed the reproachful petition of her more worldly companion on this watch.

She had already sunk on her knees by the dying man and was offering up the accustomed prayers for the departing spirit, and Gaston literally dared not interfere with such sincere and fervent piety as the gentle sister displayed, though his own troubled heart was ill able to share in the calm and undisturbed devotion that did but dwell on heavenly and spiritual things.

"It is over—he is gone; he will never be chafed and tried on earth more," she said, after a brief pause. "My lord, be content; it was not Heaven's will that the secret of which he spoke should ever be revealed."

"How do you know that I have such a title as you have given me?" asked Gaston, suddenly.

"Because I heard him who is gone give it to you when you were here before," she replied, calmly. "That is all I have to say; you are otherwise a stranger to me. I have no wish to pry into your secrets."

"Forgive me, I did not mean hurt," was the regretful reply of the young nobleman, whose chivalrous nature shrank from the very appearance of wounding that gentle and sacrificing woman. "But it is best as it is, best that neither you nor any one should be in any measure mingled with the dark story. I dare not linger even now," he went on, quite hurriedly, "not even to witness his obsequies, though an old retainer of my family, but at least I can give what will recompense you for all expenses incurred on his behalf."

And he held out a bank-note of value to the sister's shrinking hands.

"No, no; we do not tend the sick or bury the dead for gain," she said, shaking her head. "Better give him your prayers and your pity instead of worthless dross."

"Yes, yes; but I am too despairing myself for such good deeds," said Gaston, hastily. "If you will not take it as payment then let it go to the funds of your convent to help in their charities. And now good day, kind lady. I would ask of your gentle goodness but two questions. Forget that any save an unknown and humble stranger crossed this threshold, and should you discover any relics that this poor unhappy one has left that may one day throw light on his meaning take care of them for the sake of those who may perhaps suffer injustice which can never be remedied or pain that can never be healed. Farewell; pray for the living as well as the dead. They need your help and sympathies far more in their misery."

CHAPTER XIV.

"We cannot, of course, keep you longer under such circumstances, Miss Desmond," said Sir Hilary Vesoi, with the formal and stately courtesy with which he had ever treated the young woman since their first meeting, "and I quite hope that Erica will be perfectly independent of such constant nursing as you have been good enough to give her."

Thyra gave a graceful inclination of the head, by no means more cordial or less proud than the baronet's own manner.

"I do hope so, Sir Hilary," she said, faintly; "but if you will pardon my saying so, I am sorely to be satisfied about Miss Vesoi as I should gladly wish to feel. There is an unaccountable languor about her which I should not think natural. She seems so bright and energetic by nature, to judge by her manner when she is at an better for an hour or so."

And Thyra looked rather anxiously in Sir Hilary's face as she spoke, but it rather wore an angered than a sorrowful expression at her words. There are some natures that resent any unwelcome warning of sorrow and calamity, and the baronet's was certainly of that number.

"You are correct in your impression as to my daughter's temperment," he said, with dignity. "She is most decidedly a Vesoi in every respect, and consequently is not likely to yield to any vague terrors or depression."

Thyra bowed in silence. It was not her place to say more, and she had done and said all that could be her duty under the circumstances, although her own conviction remained unaltered as to the poor girl's real condition.

There was a silence for some time, and then Sir Hilary cleared his throat and once more resumed the conversation, in a broken voice.

"May I ask, Miss Desmond, what are the grounds of your alarm as to Miss Vesoi's state of health?" he asked, in a constrained tone. "I really am not acquainted with the various phases of female complaints sufficiently to understand what they may indicate, and in this case, it appears to me simply that it arises from the shock, which creates great languor in any youthful but sensitive frame."

Thyra could have smiled at the implied blindness as to her own age, which was certainly not more than some three or four years more than Erica could count for.

She had gone through the same ordeal, and a great deal more than Erica had suffered, with bravery and comparative impunity from harm.

And yet it was presumed by the proud old man that her supposed inferiority in rank must blunt and harden her power of suffering, and that she was able to go through all such trials without the superfluous impertinence of yielding to such weakness as was the privilege of high-born daughters.

"I am scarcely more experienced in such matters, Sir Hilary," she said, calmly. "My life has been spent in too much seclusion for me to understand symptoms of disease, or see it, except in rare cases," and her voice trembled as she recalled the two instances where she had played at once nurse and doctor to some extent, one being, as she knew well, the nearest relative of this formal yet helpless being. "Still," she went on, "I do see that Miss Vesoi does not rally, that there is a degree of powerlessness about her that is scarcely to be attributed simply to weakness and, if I were allowed to advise, I should suggest your consulting a physician without delay, so soon as you arrive in Dublin—or send for one here."

Sir Hilary could suppress the feeling that the warning excited, but he could not altogether repress the flush that heated his cheek nor the quick, sharp glance of his eyes as they questioned the young speaker's sincerity and meaning.

"Has she—has Erica told you this—told you to seek this of me?" he said, quickly. "She had better have spoken to me herself, if such was her wish."

"No, certainly not. Indeed, indeed it was not," said Thyra, eagerly. "Miss Vesoi has no such ideas, no such fears. It was my own belief. It was my desire that she should not be left long without aid that emboldened me to speak before leaving my care of her. It is enough that you know what I do believe is the danger. I hope from my heart that I am deceived," she went on, with the sweet, childish truth in her look and tone that could not but carry conviction with each word.

"It is very kind, very prudent, no doubt," said the baronet, uneasily; "and I shall take it into consideration what had best be done. However, it seems to be unfortunately necessary for you to leave us, if I am correct in my interpretation of Lady Mand's letter."

"Certainly," said Thyra, quietly. "I could not trespass any longer on Lady Mand's kindness. It has been very good of her to wait for me thus long, especially—"

Thyra stopped. She had been about to add: "Especially as she was an inexperienced and untried dependent on her kindness," but that admission might have led to dangerous questionings as to the past, and Mrs. O'Byrne had cautioned her on the necessity of perfect reserve on so delicate a subject.

"Exactly, and all I can do is to give you my best wishes and to offer to make all possible arrangements for your comfort in your journey," observed Sir Hilary, his conscience perhaps smiting him for his inconsideration to his daughter's gentle attendant's services.

"I think you spoke of leaving us to-morrow, and I shall be happy to send one of my servants to Dublin with you. He can return the same day or on the following morning, and," he added, with some hesitation, "being back with him the experienced doctor whom you advise should be summoned to Miss Vesoi."

Thyra bowed her lips to reject in toto the offer of the domestic's service, but she instinctively

saw that the arrangement was an excuse for really complying with a suggestion he was too proud to accept as coming from other lips.

"It is quite needless," she said, "quite, Sir Hilary; but if you are so considerate as to wish it, I will be very glad of the escort after the recent alarm. And now I will return to Miss Vesoi, if you please. It will be such a short time before I leave her now."

And Thyra quitted the room with scarcely sufficient pause to allow of any assistance on her companion's part.

She hurried to Erica's chamber with a still sadder heart than when she had left it. The very description of the girl's illness had seemed to confirm her opinion of its gravity; and she had already conceived a sincere love for the high-spirited but warm-hearted daughter of the proud old baronet.

She opened the door with a cautious noiselessness that could not have disturbed Miss Erica herself, and as she stepped softly forward she perceived that her patient was in truth sleeping.

She looked for a brief instant on the fair young face, and her conviction was confirmed that the unnatural pallor and peculiar sadness of its expression must proceed from some other cause than mere shaken nerves where so young a creature was in question.

She bent down, pressed her lips lightly on the pale forehead, and glided from the room into the temptingly fresh air of the large and well-kept garden of the hotel.

The evening was yet young, and Thyra longed so irresistibly for some relief from the post-up closeness of the sick room that she opened the gates which communicated with a neighboring field, and wandered on under the shade of a perfect avenue of tall limes that guarded as it were, the domain of the well-managed hotel of Mullingar.

It was something to be alone in that gradually dimming light—something that reminded her of the happy past—and she went on, unmindful of the hour and the distance, till reminded of her position by the sudden termination of the avenue and the presence of a gate that opened on to what was apparently the high road to some other and distant place, untroubled by the advent of steam and iron highways.

Thyra remained there for a few moments, gazing idly on the silent path, and watching the declining beams of the setting sun through the massive boughs of the limes, when her attention was attracted by the sound of steps, and in another moment a figure came in sight from a turn in the winding road.

It is natural in a secluded place to take notice of every trifle that would not even occasion a passing glance in more frequented spots; and Thyra's eyes were turned with a vague interest on the approaching stranger, but a returning sense of her lonely position and the lateness of the hour at once struck her with some shame and alarm, and she was about to retreat with a crimsoning flush at her own folly, when a sudden exclamation, a sound of her own name, pronounced in well-remembered accents, arrested her steps.

"Thyra! Is it possible?" was uttered in a tone that bespoke at once pleasure and a touching sadness which went to her heart as she stopped and looked timidly at the speaker.

There was no doubt now.

It was the stranger whose name had never been revealed to her, but who was so intimately connected with the most memorable episode of her life for her to ever forget his features or his existence.

But they were sadly changed now, though more in expression than in their contour or the hue or the full, manly roundness of the face.

There was none of the half-cynical power, the superiority to any passing error, in that sad, despairing look, in the dark circles round the beautiful eyes, nor the worldliness of the mobile features. Thyra could not have left him in that evident piteous sorrow, whatever she might have done in his former masculine vigour and health.

"Are you ill?" she asked, as she extended her hand after the first hurried exchange of surprised greetings. "You look so suffering—more even than myself," she added, with some astonishment at his disregard of her involuntary and fearfully proffered of her small, ungloved fingers.

"I am not worthy to press your unstained hand in my guilty fingers," he said, with a shudder. "Miss Desmond, when I last saw you I had the blessing of assisting to save a life. Now it is different. I have been the unhappy instrument of taking one. Yes, you may well start and recoil from me. I know it, and I deserve your horror and scorn."

But Thyra could not lavish such crashing, if deserved, reproach on that unhappy and remorseful one, even if he had been as guilty as his confession implied, but which she could scarcely bring herself to believe.

"You blame yourself too severely, perhaps," she said, timidly. "I cannot believe it of you. You would never do such a terrible deed as—"

"Murder, you would say," he returned, seeing that she stopped. "No, it is not what is usually called by that name, but it is the same in its effects. Ask no more details, Miss Desmond," he said. "They are not fit for such ears as yours. Only tell me that you are happy—that is the best consolation you can give me in my hopeless sorrow."

The girl shook her head.
"No, no," she said. "I cannot be really happy when I have lost my only relative—my dear, dear father. I am alone in the earth, but I am resigned to my fate, and I mean to strive hard in my new duties, to forget the past; and you, surely it is not hopeless—surely the life is not gone. Perhaps you are mistaken. There may be happiness for you in that blessed thought."

He smiled sadly, as if in gratitude for the very doubt she suggested.

"I am tempted to put faith in what such a voice as yours speaks," he replied, "though the hope is so fearfully hazardous even to indulge for a moment. But I thank you, Thyrza Desmond," he said, warmly, "I thank you, from my heart, that you have shown me I can be pitied and tolerated by one so good and so pure. Farewell, and may Heaven bless you as you deserve."

(To be continued.)

LOVE.

Men are made happy by love, unhappy by love; die for love; while young maidens do all of these, only with a greater degree of intensity than our sex ever realize. Among the stern realities of life, love springs up like fragrant flowers in our path, from amid the rough and stony way, gladdening our eyes, and assuming the aspect of the morning glory of our existence. It robs the heart of selfishness, refines the feelings and sensibilities, quickens the power of perception, and throws a halo of romance and of beauty over every action of our lives. Its flame is born in Heaven, whence its reflection radiates to us. It is thus that love is to the mortal nature precisely what the sun is to the earth.

An ancient maxim declares that where there exists the most ardent and true love, it is often better to be united in death than to be separated in life; but this is altogether too pungent for our philosophy. It might do very well for the French, who seem to be so fond of suicide, but it would find few practical followers in this country, for a man of sense may love like a madman, but not like a fool.

Looking upon love in another light, Addison says: "Ridicule, perhaps, is a better expedient against love than sober advice; and I am of opinion that Hudibras and Don Quixote may be as effectual to cure the extravagance of this passion as any one of the old philosophers." Herein Addison shows a want of heart and appreciation, and counts without his host, not realizing the true power and force of love. He who has really felt the passion could easily silence the philosopher. Sir Philip Sidney does it in two lines, for he says: "True love can no more be diminished by showers of evil than flowers are marred by timely rain." As the course of true love did never yet run smooth, opposition to it but nourishes and strengthens it.

In the matter of courtship, the plainest man who can convince a woman that he is sincerely, madly in love with her has half won the battle. It is the sincerest flattery, and what woman, or man, for that matter, is not susceptible to flattery? Yet love hardly bears analyzing. If a man loves a woman simply for her beauty, can he be said to really and sincerely love her? Certainly not; for should the small-pox, which inevitably destroys her beauty, intervene, without killing her, it causes his love to cease. The intoxication of love comes from beauty, but it differs from wine in that it intoxicates both the holder and the beholder. Some one has defined it as being "an egotism of two."

To be actually in love, and fulfil love's promptings, is a most delightful occupation. It involves such activity. As Ovid says: "Let him who does not choose to be considered a lazy fellow fall in love," he will surely find activity enough in its multifarious requirements, and duty too of the most delightful character. A man cannot fall half in love; he must be over head and ears or not at all. And yet it has been very truthfully said that love is like a hunter, who cares very little for the game after it is once caught which he may have pursued with the most intense and breathless energy. It is in pursuit, not in fruition, alas! that the greatest happiness lies.

It is curious what a microscope the heart is. There are no little events in that region; everything worthy to be admitted there becomes intensified. It places in the same scale the fall of an empire or the dropping of a lady's glove! Yet what is its physical capacity? It is a very small portion of the

human body, so small that it would hardly afford a meal for a kite, yet its capacity is undefined, its aspirations infinite. To this centre aims love, its home, its paradise. It knows how to find its way thither, as the tiny insect moves to its special flower, with an irresistible will that nothing can daunt, and yet, as Shakespeare tells us, "though love use reason for its precision, he admits him not for his counsellor."

Love purifies us. He who is loved by a beautiful and virtuous woman carries a talisman about him; he is elevated thereby. Some one has compared love very pertinently to a burning-glass, which, kept still upon one object, fuses it; but which changed often does nothing. This fact also suggests to us one other truth: Love is much like fire in this respect, that it cannot live without motion, it ceases to exist as soon as it ceases to hope or fear, while it dies by satiety and is interred by forgetfulness.

IN THE NEST.

GATHER them close to your loving heart—

Cradle them on your breast!

They will soon enough leave your brooding care—

Soon enough mount youth's topmost stair—

Little ones in the nest.

Fret not that the children's hearts are gay,

That the restless feet will run;

There may come a time, in the by-and-bye,

When you sit in your lonely room and sigh

For a sound of childish fun.

When you'll long for the repetition sweet

That sounded through each room,

O "mother," "mother," the dear love-calls

That will echo long in the silent halls

And add to their stately gloom.

There may come a time when you'll long to hear

The eager boyish tread,

The tuneless whistle, the clear shrill shout,

The busy bustling in and out,

And the pattering overhead.

When the boys and girls are all grown up,

And scattered far and wide,

Or gone to that beautiful golden shore

Where sickness and death come never more,

You will miss them from your side.

Then gather them close to your loving heart—

Cradle them on your breast;

They will soon enough leave your brooding care—

Soon enough mount youth's topmost stair—

Little ones in the nest.

R. M.

THE WRONG ROUTE.

It was in 1844, if I remember right, not long after I got back from years of hard service in the Seminole war in Florida, and I thought I'd see a little of prairie life.

So I went West with my Colt's rifle and a pair of revolvers, the only repeating arms in use then, bought a good horse at Saint Joe, a pair of blankets, and some "camp fixings," which I stowed on the meanest pack-mule I ever saw, and started.

I was an independent sort of a customer, and thought because I had tracked Indians through the Big Cypress and the Everglades, that I knew almost everything about woodcraft and quite everything about Indians.

I had to learn that Southern swamps and Western prairies are two sorts of things, and about as much alike as cheese and bacon.

I launched out boldly for what was known at Saint Joe as the Buffalo Range, and at the end of a fair day's ride, shortened in distance by the laziness of my pack-mule, camped close to the store of a trader, who offered me shelter for nothing if I chose to accept it.

In the morning I went to his store, laid in an addition to my supply of powder and lead, and bought a few ribbons, beads and calicoes for presents in case I met friendly Indians, as I expected to, for I had no idea of going alone into a section where they were hostile. After paying for these I listened to some well-meant advice from the trader, who told me there was a gang of mean white men out in the direction I was going who would "clean me out," or in other words rob me, as sure as I crossed their path, for they lived by robbery. They had been driven thus far back from the settlements in consequence of their evil deeds, but they still followed their trade when a victim came within their reach.

The reader may believe that though very young and adventurous in those days, I had no desire single-handed to meet these desperadoes, and I made careful inquiries regarding the route I should take to avoid them.

He told me that if I rode on "right peert" I would reach a range of hills a little after noon on the way that led due west from his house. Just as I got to the hills where a stream came out I'd find the traces fork. I must take the one to the north, and by sundown I would be at the village of Spotted Wolf, a Platte chief, who was friendly and would receive me well.

The track to the south led to the hills, where an old Kentucky outlaw named Penfield, with a gang of desperadoes, kept his quarters. The outlaws' den and the Indian village were about the same distance from his place. He said he was obliged to pay these fellows a regular tax for immunity to keep goods and trade, and if he had not done this they would have taken what they wanted and burned the rest, long before.

I started early, determined to be in the camp of the friendly Indians before dark. But that mule, worse a thousand times than the one Baalam rode, would stop to feed and try to roll his pack off, and it was afternoon when I came in sight of the hills where the track forked. To make it worse, one of the blackest thunderstorms you ever saw was coming up, and when I reached the hills I could scarcely see any track at all. Just then the rain began to pour, but as I had no place of shelter I pushed on, taking, as I believed, the track to the north.

On I went, the mule now scared enough to keep up until the night's darkness began to deepen. I could see no fitting place to camp. There was water and too much of it, but no wood. I might as well keep going as to stand and soak, or run the risk of losing horse and mule in the darkness, so let my horse have his bit, believing he would keep the road when I could not.

At last I saw, to my delight, a glimpse of a fire ahead, and the horse saw it as soon as I, for his ears went up, and his pace increased.

The road was rough, but we made good time, getting a sight of a blaze through fringing bushes every little while, and I was reckoning how good an antelope steak or a bit of venison tenderloin would taste broiled over the coals when, sharp and sudden, in English, all too good-for my comfort, came his words:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"Thunder!" I thought. "I've taken the wrong track, and I'm at the den of robbers."

"Speak quick, or I fire," again shouted the voice, and I heard the hammer click close to me; it seemed not five yards away.

"A friend," I said, as quick as I could.

"A friend to whom?" was the next query.

"To anybody who'll give me a supper and a fire to lie down by, for I'm lost, I believe."

"Stand where you are till the sergeant comes. Sergeant of the guard, post four."

"Why they talk like regulars. The old outlaw must keep up military discipline," I muttered, while I stood there shivering.

Soon the measured but quick tread of a squad of men was heard, the answer to the sentinel's hail was "Sergeant and guard," the countersign was called for and whispered, and then I was called forward, and at once conducted into camp.

If ever I felt glad I did about then and there. I had taken the wrong trail, and was within ten or twelve miles of the robbers' stronghold, but the camp I had come upon was that of a company of the 2d Dragoons, stationed there to cut off the retreat of the desperadoes, while a battalion under Colonel Harney had taken a route to attack them in the rear.

I was received kindly by Lieutenant Phil Kearney, and over a nice supper told him how I had taken the wrong track in the gloom of the thunder-storm.

The next day we had the pleasure of intercepting a part of the brigands, who, asking no quarters, got none, but went down fighting, leaving two dead dragoons and four wounded ones to show that they were game.

The best luck I had, a random bullet killed my lazy, worthless mule, and Lieutenant Kearney gave me a better one.

THE WRONG TIME.—"Put the little ones happy to bed," says some one, alluding to the habit that some parents have of deferring punishment for faults committed during the day until bed-time. Never whip children just before they retire to rest. Let the father's caress, the mother's kiss, be the last link between the day's pain or pleasure and the night's sleep. Send the children to bed happy. If there is sorrow, punishment, or disgrace, let them meet it in the daytime, and have hours of play or thought in which to recover happiness, which is childhood's right. Let the weary feet, the busy brain, rest in bed happy.



[A TRUE HEART.]

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

BY
CHARLES GARVICK,
AUTHOR OF

"Only Country Love," "The Gipsy Peer," "Fickle Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A good heart is the sun and the moon; or rather the sun, for it shines bright and never changes.
Shakespeare.

QUITE unconscious of the Nemesis which was already on his track, the captain was rapidly bringing his scheme to a climax.

The world was, of course, very much astonished to hear that Mr. Howard Murpoint was the man Miss Mildmay was to marry, and many blamed her for her fickleness.

But Violet was perfectly indifferent to praise or blame. She pursued the even tenor of her way, calm, serene as usual, with the peaceful and almost sad smile on her face and her usual gentle manner to all.

Mrs. Mildmay had been very much surprised to hear that Violet had, so to speak, changed her mind. But Mrs. Mildmay thought it was a very good change, for she believed the captain to be the best and cleverest man in the world, and perhaps considered him the handsomest.

When Violet went to old Mrs. Dodson, the mother of the man she had loved and whose memory she cherished, she was fearful that the old lady would be grieved.

Perhaps Mrs. Dodson was, but all she said was: "Violet, my dear, you will do what is right, I know, and—if this seems to you right, do it. But do you love him?"

"I cannot do that," said Violet, kissing the old lady's hand with a loving tenderness. "You know where my heart is—it will never leave Leicester, never! But Mr. Murpoint does not ask me for love, but for respect and esteem."

"And you give him these?" asked Mrs. Dodson, with a slight shade on her brow.

Violet's face shadowed and reflected that shade of distrust, but almost instantly she replied:

"I cannot conceal anything from you who have been a mother to me, dear. One time I neither esteemed nor trusted Mr. Murpoint—indeed, I disliked him. But all that feeling has gone," she continued, hurriedly. "He has been a true, a kind friend to

me—he was my father's friend, and how dare I distrust the man he loved and trusted. No, when the feeling I have spoken of has come over me I have cast it off as unworthy and unjust. Lately"—and she sighed—"it has not come. Mother, I seem to have no feeling, no emotion. Life is but a dream and a sleep to me sometimes, and I think that I shall wake perhaps, and—But there!" she broke off, springing to her feet and putting up her hand as if to ward off the feeling of unhappiness which was creeping upon her. "I will not give way to it. I will trust my father's best friend, and I will try with all my heart to be a good wife to him."

"Heaven bless you!" said Mrs. Dodson, sobbing. "Would that I could have been a mother indeed to you. But it was not to be. My boy was taken from your side, and it is not right that you should remain alone in the world, wedded to a shadow. Violet, you will not change to me? You will love me still?"

For answer the gentle girl threw her arms round the old lady's neck and burst into tears.

"You will always be my mother!" she said, "for are you not Leicester's?"

So the pure, just-minded girl strove to trust and love the man whom she had consented to take as a husband.

He, meanwhile, was all smiles and honeyed words, looking handsomer and more confident than ever.

The world declared that there was no end to his successes and that he was the most wonderful man of the times.

Soon it was rumoured that the marriage between him and the wealthy Miss Mildmay was to take place almost immediately, and that when it did Howard Murpoint, M.P., would be made a baronet.

No wonder the great man looked happy as he rode his magnificent hunter in the park or appeared in the salons of the élite with his beautiful betrothed on his arm.

But was he happy?

Who could see him when he was alone: at night when he sat crouched within his easy-chair in his own room, or pacing up and down with the sleek restlessness of a tiger caged and ferocious, well fed but distrustful?

Noas saw him but his bad angel and himself as he looked into the mirror which reflected his dark, working face.

The world knew nothing of the twenty thousand pounds which Mr. Wilhelm Smythe had extorted from him.

The world knew nothing of the scar on his leg which the convict gang-chain had left there; of the

perjury which his brain had plotted, or the vile murder his hands had wrought.

These and other crimes the world knew nothing of, but he knew, and though he strove to forget he could not. In the dead of the night, or perhaps in the gray dawn when he had thrown himself upon the bed to woo sleep after a day of wilful pleasure or a night of dancing and fashion, sleep would come, but bring bad dreams with it.

He dreamt that he was in the prison cell; toiling in the hot sun under the Portland Cliff, with the horrid chain galling at his leg. The n visions of the haunted chapel at Penruddie crowded his brain; and one night he started up, cold with horror, from a vision of Jem, mangled and ghastly, standing beside his bed pointing to a red, gaping wound. Then too, in those dreadful waking hours, when sleep would not come, fear took its place, and he moved in an agony of dread, fancying that his secret was known, that the detectives were on his track and that the gallows was looming before him.

But in the morning these disquieting visions always fled and breakfast-time found the great man serene, placid, watchful and smiling, ready to do battle with the world and conquer it.

Preparations for the wedding were proceeding, hastened by the great man's commands and purse.

It was to be a grand wedding, much against Violet's wish, and the fashionable world was on tiptoe of expectation. For it was known that Mr. Murpoint was to be made a Baronet and that he would take one of the largest mansions in Belgravia and commence a series of entertainments immediately after the happy couple returned from the wedding tour.

Violet's dress was ordered, the bridesmaids chosen, and the tour arranged before Fitz had returned to town from the execution of his little plot with Bertie and Ethel. He called for his letters at his club, and thrust them in his pocket unread; he noticed that men looked rather strangely and almost commiseratingly at him, and wondered what was the matter. Without much loss of time he called at Mrs. Mildmay's and asked for Violet.

Violet was upstairs in her own room, alone and musing, when the maid came to tell her that Lord Boldsdale was in the drawing room.

"Lord Boldsdale!" repeated poor Violet, turning pale. "Did he ask for me?"

"Yes, miss," said the maid. "Particularly for you."

"Well," said Violet, sadly. "I will see him."

She was surprised that Fitz should ask to see her after the letter she had written to him, for it was a letter full of true womanly gratitude and kindness,

explaining everything, and begging him, if he loved and respected her, not to see her before the wedding.

Now, Fitz had called she thought to harass her with reproaches, perhaps to assess her of great insincerity. She determined to be brave and see him, so she went with rather faltering feet into the drawing-room.

Fitz rose at once and came towards her with suppressed eagerness.

"My dear Miss Mildmay—Violet!" he exclaimed, "I have come back, and left Ethel and Dorrie the happiest couple in the world! You have heard the news of course, and you think I have done right? Ah, if you could have seen them when the parties had made them one both turn to me and thank me! Bore the shaking my head off, with tears in his eyes, and Ethel, dear gentle Ethel, clasping round my neck, and declaring I had saved her! Well, well," and Fitz broke out to wipe with a hand a suspicious moisture in his own eyes. "They are off to Italy, and I left them on the point looking as happy as a couple of children, and I don't care what the world says and what the earl and countess say, I know I've done the proper thing and these two were made for one another!"

So he rushed on in his eager, simple way, utterly unconscious of the pallor of his face, with his look of astonishment and dread.

For Violet knew by his manner that he had not received her letter, and that she should have to tell him that she had refused him and accepted Howard Murpoint.

"Well," said Fitz, "they sent all sorts of messages to you, and Ethel implored me with tears in her eyes to assure you of her affection and love. Poor Ethel, all her troubles are over now, and she's happy. Violet, dare I hope that you forgive me and think I have done right? And will you make me happy, too, Violet?" and, with an imploring look, he tried to take her hand.

Violet drew it from him and went on to the sofa. Fitz looked perplexed, and stared.

"You don't speak! You haven't said a word!" he said. "What is the matter?"

"Have you not received my letter?" she breathed.

"No," said Fitz, thrusting his hands into his pockets. "Perhaps it is here; I haven't opened them yet. Oh, Violet, you have not refused me; you don't mean to make me miserable for life! Don't say it, don't say it!"

"I have written it," said Violet, paler and paler each moment. "I have written a full explanation. It cannot be; it is for ever impossible. Lord Botsdale—Fitz, I am to marry Mr. Murpoint."

"What!" exclaimed Fitz, "am I dreaming—am I mad? Violet, you are to marry the captain!"

Violet rose.

"Let me leave you, my lord! I am so sorry that my letter—then she turned and tried to leave the room."

But Fitz strode after her and seized her arm.

"Violet," he said, "one word more. I see I am not dreaming, that it's truth you are telling me. But if it is true there is villainy somewhere! You are right to reprove me. Heaven knows I am not worthy of you—but the captain!"

"Violet, if Leicester could come to life again, I would have yielded to him quietly, without a word, for I know you were his. But not to the captain! You never did and you never can care for him, and if you marry him it will be against your will. Violet, listen to me, I implore you. I believe—I am sure within my own heart that the captain, Howard Murpoint, is a rogue and a villain."

"Silence!" said Violet, sadly, yet indignantly. "You forget yourself, my lord! You have no right to say such cruel things, to attack an absent man. Mr. Murpoint will be my husband, and I will not—I dare not listen to such a groundless accusation. Enough! Not a word more. Leave me, I beg, my lord!"

"Yet one word more, I implore," said Fitz. "I will leave you and I will not see you again; but, mark me, I will not let the matter rest, and if you care for Howard Murpoint, as you would have me believe you do, warn him that there is one on his track who will search him to the heart, and who will, Ethel him what it may, find whether he is an honest man or the rogue he thinks him. Violet, Ethel has escaped his clutches, and you have fallen into them. Escape while there is time, I implore of you! See, I beg you on my knees to take time, to do nothing rashly, to break off this hateful, this horrible engagement!"

"If there had been one thing wanting to confirm me in the path I have taken, Lord Botsdale, your words have supplied it. I will do my duty by an innocent man maligned, and be true to him. I will

be true to the man I have promised to marry, though all the world rose to slander him."

"Violet, you do not love him!" groaned Fitz. "No," said Violet. "But, though I have lost the power to love, I can still act with honour."

And, with a sad smile, she left the room. Fitz rose, stunned and dazed.

He took up his hat and, leaving the house, walked in a maze to Lackland House.

As he was about to enter a footman came up to him.

"My lord, the earl is desirous of seeing you."

"But," said Fitz, who was scarcely conscious of what he was about.

"Upstairs, my lord, in the earl's study."

"All right," said Fitz, and he ascended the stairs with a heavy gait.

Knocking at the study door, he received a cold, stern "Come in," and, entering, found Lord Lackland seated in the same chair at the same table in the same room in which he had sat that morning when he informed Fitz that the Lackland estates were mortgaged and that the Lackland purse was empty.

"Good morning," said Fitz.

The earl bowed with cold politeness.

"You have arrived this morning?"

"This morning," said Fitz. "I haven't been in town these hours."

"I am glad of it," said the earl, "as I wished to see you immediately you arrived."

"I left home—"

"Thank you," said the earl, interrupting him with steady politeness. "I do not wish to know anything of your domestic and undutiful sister. If I should at any time I will come to you, who, it seems, is a partner and chief actor in her misconduct. Be good enough not to mention her name to me."

"But, my lord," said Fitz, who was nearly out of his mind, "surely you do not mean to say that you intend to be here upon Ethel for marrying where she liked? She has not married a villainous scoundrel, or run away with one of the coachmen. Dorrie is the best, the most famous man in London—"

"Thank you for the information," said the earl.

"I know nothing of Mr. Fairfax, and I do not wish to add to my knowledge. Be kind enough to leave the subject where it is; it is one that is extremely distasteful to me. I wished to see you on business. Here are a number of bills—they have all been contracted by you—I pass them to you for payment."

Fitz stared at them.

"My lord," he said, "I cannot pay these! You know that it is impossible!"

The earl shrugged his shoulders.

"I have nothing to do with that," he said, coldly.

"You are over age, you were twenty-two last month, you are liable, I believe."

"I am liable, I know," said Fitz, in despair, "but of course, sir, I have always looked to you."

"And, I believe, some time back, in this very room, I warned you that you could no longer do so. I have my own bills to pay, and I cannot concern myself with any others. Be good enough to take them away, they litter my table."

"But," said Fitz, "I cannot pay them, and you know that I cannot. What is to be done?"

"I regret that I cannot tell you. I should advise you to pay them, or in all probability the creditors will endeavour to compel you."

"In other words they will put me in prison."

The earl shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot say; I know nothing about it. May I remind you again of the conversation which I before mentioned as taking place between us in this room? I ventured to advise you; my advice was not taken; you cannot be surprised at my reluctance to repeat that advice."

"Is it my fault that Violet Mildmay very properly refused to enrich a ruined house by marrying the poverty-stricken eldest son, and heir, who, love her as he does, is utterly unworthy of her?"

"Your fault!" retorted the earl, with icy scorn.

"I know nothing of your affairs, but unless I am grossly misinformed it is your fault that Ethel has married a boy and refused a millionaire; that is enough for me. Go on in the course you have before you, Lord Botsdale. Go in the path you are treading, and had yourself a penniless debtor, rotting in jail; it is perfectly indifferent to me. I have pointed out to you the secret of success—you have scorned it or failed to get it by rank foolery. I have done with you! Lackland Hall and money will last my life-time; afterwards it can go the dogs, which I can see already at your heels. I am busy, and therefore compelled to wish you good morning."

So saying, the earl pointed to the pile of bills, and then to the door.

Lord Fitz took up the bills and quietly left the room, dazed still, and more like a man walking in his sleep.

CHAPTER XLIX.

We left Leicester and Mr. Thaxton, seated by Stumpy, carrying Job to the nearest magistrate's.

When Leicester had, as well as he was able, removed his disguise, and Job saw that Leicester was alive and in the flesh, he had shown the greatest joy and that notwithstanding the personal peril which Leicester's whim had placed him in.

After a time, when Job reflected upon all the consequences which would fall upon himself, he grew wonderfully quiet, and sat at the bottom of the car sullen and moody.

"I suppose I'll be hanged," he said, "and I deserve it; but I'll tell the whole truth, Master Leicester, every word of it."

"In that case," said Leicester, "I will do my best to shield you from punishment."

"I'll turn King's evidence," said Job, with a grin. "I won't turn on the tape; but I'll be even with the captain, once him!"

Mr. Thaxton exchanged glances with Leicester, and drove on in silence.

As the morning broke they had left the ruined chapel a long way behind, and were nearing Tenby. At this point Mr. Thaxton pulled up, and ordered Leicester to step out of the car, as he wished to say a word to him.

Leicester alighted, nodding to Job, warningly.

"Do not attempt to escape," he said, "I warn you."

"You leave him to me, sir," said Stumpy, cheerfully and significantly, and Leicester followed Mr. Thaxton.

"It has just occurred to me, or rather I have been thinking of it all the way—that you are under a warrant still, Mr. Dodson! Any moment you are liable to arrest. There is a hundred pounds reward, remember, and so large an amount makes men keen. In Tenby there are many men who know you—or at least must have seen you often, you may be detected."

"Not through this disguise," said Leicester.

"Not through that disguise; but by your voice, you cannot disguise that sufficiently. I should have known you by it. Better stay out of the way quietly awhile until Job's deposition is taken."

"Very well," said Leicester, "I follow your advice to the letter. All I want is to be near those I love and protect them until that villain is under lock and key. Then it does not matter what becomes of me," he added, sadly.

"Hem!" said Mr. Thaxton, "I think I know what is the matter. I have heard of Miss Mildmay's engagement, but that may be your right."

"Not by me," said Leicester, in a low voice. "I love her still, but I will not interfere with the quiet happiness which she enjoys. Fitz is a better man than I—and, but, there, let us talk no more of it, and he jumped into the car."

At that moment, while Mr. Thaxton was starting the horse, they heard the noise of wheels behind them, and before they were aware of it a small, high gig was close beside them.

"Hullo!" called out a voice, which Leicester seemed to recognize. "What, is it vegetables? no, small party enjoying themselves—Oh! what's that? A man handcuffed!" And before any one could prevent him he had dropped from his own gig and jumped into their car.

"I know your face, my man," he said to Job, "and yours too, sir, if I'm not mistaken. You are a lawyer, Mr. Thaxton—concerned in the little affair at Penriddle; may I ask where you are taking this man—Job is his name, I think?"

Mr. Thaxton glanced at Leicester apprehensively. "You are quite right," he said. "The man's name is Job, and I am a lawyer. I detected him robbing this gentleman—a Spaniard—and his servant, and I am assisting them to take him to the nearest station."

"Hem!" said the stranger.

"But you have the advantage of me," continued Mr. Thaxton. "For although I seem to know your voice I do not recognize you. May I ask upon what ground you thus exercise your curiosity?"

"Oh," said the stranger, with a laugh, putting off a large board which had nearly concealed his face. "I'm Detective Doekell; you know me now I suppose."

"Oh, dear me, yes," said Mr. Thaxton, shooting another glance at Leicester more apprehensive than the last. "I am glad to see you. I suppose you are going on to Tenby; you will be there before I shall—I am surprised your horse doesn't run away—"

"He won't run away," said Mr. Doekell. "He'd follow me down a coal mine, or up a balloon. Yes, I'm going on to Tenby, sir. I've had a little smuggling job on here. Perhaps I can do something for you in Tenby? Remember that Penriddle murder, wasn't it? I suppose nothing has ever turned up, sir?"

"You are the person to know best about this. You were engaged in the case. No, nothing more over transpired. No doubt Mr. Leicester Dodson committed the deed, and was lifted himself in the struggle. But it is a painful case—and I don't like to talk about it."

"Just so," said Mr. Dockett. "Well, I think I'll get into my trap. Good-night, gentlemen. Good-night, son."

Leicester, who had kept his face turned away as much as possible, bowed gravely, and muttered good-night in Spanish.

As he did so Mr. Dockett, who had risen, plumped down on the side of the chair again and looked at him out of the corner of his eye.

"Been long in England, son?" he asked.

"The gentleman doesn't speak English," said Mr. Thaxton.

"Just ask him, will you, sir?" said Mr. Dockett, with a pleasant smile.

Mr. Thaxton jabbered something meant to imitate Spanish, and Leicester, who, notwithstanding his perilous position, could scarcely restrain his laughter, answered him.

Again, at the sound of Leicester's voice, Mr. Dockett got a little closer and eyed him.

Then he rose.

"Ah," he said, "got a bad opinion of England if he gets robbed like this, this chap tried to pick his pocket?"

"No; steal his portmanteau," said Mr. Thaxton.

"Good-night," said Mr. Dockett and he made a step forward, but the cart seemed to jolt at that moment, for he missed his footing, staggered, and fell against Leicester, managing as he fell to drag off Leicester's hat, spectacles and false beard.

Then, before any one could utter a word, he leapt to his feet, laid his hand upon Leicester's shoulder, and, with a quiet grin, said:

"Mr. Leicester Dodson, I arrest you on a charge of wilful murder! Here is the warrant—I've always carried it with me. No resistance, I hope?"

"None," said Leicester, with a drawn expression.

"I surrender, Mr. Dockett."

"Now that's what I call right and proper and gentlemanly," said Mr. Dockett, admiringly. "But, bless my heart and soul! who'd ever have thought that I should have dropped upon you here and at this time, and like this?"

"Did you not know it was so?" said Mr. Thaxton, sadly.

"Were you not following us?"

"No," said Mr. Dockett, with a quiet chuckle. "I was on quite a different job. Not that I thought you would never turn up. I wasn't taken in by that story of your falling over the cliff. It wasn't likely a gentleman with such muscle as you would allow yourself to be pulled over by a half-drunken, wounded man. No, I knew you'd turn up again some day, and I was waiting my time. And here you are!"

"Yes," said Leicester, "and you have earned your hundred pounds. So you think I committed the murder?"

"I think you'll be hung for it," said Mr. Dockett, after a minute's silence.

"Thank you," said Leicester, with a grim smile.

"It is easier of you, Mr. Dockett."

"Well, sir, no offence. I'm certain that if you didn't do the trick you know something about it."

"I did not do it, and I did not know anything about it. But there is a man who does know something about it."

And he pointed to Job.

"Ah!" said Mr. Dockett.

"Yes," said Mr. Thaxton. And then, nodding to Leicester to be silent, he told Mr. Dockett all that had occurred and all that Job had confessed in the ruined chapel.

Mr. Dockett listened most attentively to the concise and exact statement made by the lawyer, scarcely taking his eyes from Job the while, and yet taking note of every movement made by the others.

Then he said, when Mr. Thaxton had finished:

"And I suppose all this little story about the robbery was a cover. You meant to take Job here on to Tenby?"

"To make his statement and obtain a warrant for the real criminal," said Mr. Thaxton.

Mr. Dockett indulged in a quiet chuckle.

"That's good," he said. "Why, you would have played into Captain M's hands. Nothing would have been clearer for him."

"How so?" asked Mr. Thaxton.

"Why, thus," said Mr. Dockett. "You go, we'll say, to Tenby; you take this precious old rascal before a magistrate. What he does is to issue a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Leicester, and one for the captain. The captain surrenders, of course, and comes up for examination. He braves it out, de-

clares the whole thing as plain as to get Mr. Leicester out of the scrape; says Job has been bribed; and desires you to produce a title of evidence against him. You can't, you know, not at present; the magistrate says he must discharge the captain, who leaves the court without a stain upon his honor. Meanwhile Mr. Leicester comes up, all the evidence already against him is produced, the nasty impression of the attempt to assassinate the captain is brought to bear, and Mr. Leicester is committed for trial. All the while between the examination and the trial we take up more evidence, and the whole thing is brought to a conclusion."

"As how?" said Mr. Thaxton, who was deeply impressed by the detective's argument.

"Mr. Leicester is hunting for the murder of James Stirling; and Captain Stirling—or rather Sir Howard Murpoint, M.P.—marries the wealthy Miss Mildmay, and lives happily ever afterwards."

Leicester rose to his full height stern and threatening.

"One word more of such impudence, sir, and I fling you out of the door! How dare you make use of that lady's name, sir?"

"Where?" exclaimed Mr. Dockett. "You haven't heard the news."

"News, what news?" asked Leicester, sternly.

"That the captain is to be made a baronet, and that he is to marry his ward, Miss Mildmay."

"It is false!" said Leicester, gasping. Mr. Thaxton's head nodded.

"Very likely," said Mr. Dockett. "They say nothing's true as the papers. Take waste all of 'em yesterday morning, and with me off to the 'bureau' something in it, gentlemen!"

"It must not be," said Leicester, grunting. "I would rather see her in her grave. She may marry him, or any honest man, as that she is happy, but as that she should, see that villain! Look you, sir," he said, turning suddenly to Mr. Dockett and laying a hand upon his arm to emphasize his words, "you will gain a hundred pounds by my arrest. Now, I say nothing about my own innocence or my guilt, I say so more on that score; but I say this, and this gentlemen will bear me out, I will give you one thousand pounds if you will take the trouble to investigate the statements you heard from this man. One thousand pounds! It is a fair sum! You are not to prove my innocence—let that go for to prove his guilt; any part will do, so that it prevents this marriage."

"Agreed on," said Mr. Dockett. "I'll take the contract, on condition that everything is left in my hands."

Mr. Thaxton conferred with Leicester for a few minutes, and then Leicester answered:

"We agree to trust you; and if the reflection will have any weight in keeping you faithful and honest, answering in your task, I would have you remember that in trusting you I do so wholly, being tied hand and foot to you."

"Exactly," said Mr. Dockett, with a queer twinkle of the eye. "Then as we are agreed, I'll get you to allow me to drive."

And he took the reins from Mr. Thaxton's hands, calling to Stumpy:

"Young man, just get into my gig, will you, and follow us after."

So saying he turned the cart round and drove back towards Penraddis.

When they got near the village he stopped the horse and unfastened Job's bonds.

"Now you get home, Mr. Job," he said, quietly, and fixing a significant glance upon Job's face. "You go on as usual, and keep your eyes open and your mouth shut. See, I test you because I know you know me. I'm Detective Dockett, of Her Majesty's Police, Scotland Yard, and when I trust a man and find him false, I go for him, and put my hand on him if he's at the other end of the world—I've such a long arm—and when I've got him I don't let him go till he's had a taste of Her Majesty's jail and stinks. But there, I needn't tell you what I can do, for you know me."

Job nodded sullenly, and looked up at Leicester.

"I don't want no threats," he said. "I'll do my duty by Master Leicester there if I swing for it."

And, with an affectionate glance, he hurried off.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mr. Dockett, pleasantly, "we must break up the party. I think you had better get back to town, sir; we shall want a lawyer directly."

"Very well," said Mr. Thaxton.

"As for you, sir, of course you're under arrest; I've got your word for that."

Leicester nodded.

"Then I think, sir, you and your man will go to Sanderson's—where you were before, you know—and wait till the evening. I'll come to you. By the way, I haven't had the pleasure of your man's acquaintance."

Here Stumpy turned round and rather dolefully presented himself for inspection.

Mr. Dockett looked hard at him and turned aside. "Ah!" he said. "I don't know him, I think, but I may some day, and very good friends we shall be."

Stumpy suppressed a groan, then suddenly tore off his wig and with a desperate recklessness exclaimed:

"Take no care, I know it well! You'll find it out some day, sooner or later! Here I am, sir!"

"Eh?" said Mr. Dockett, with genuine astonishment. "Why, hang me, if this isn't a regular pantomime! You're the man who was split upon by the General and got it for his life?"

Stumpy nodded his head desperately.

"Right, you are," he said. "Put 'em on," and he held out his hands for the handcuffs.

Mr. Dockett, however, seemed to enjoy the joke so much as to be incapable of doing his duty.

"Well if this isn't a pantomime!" he chuckled.

"No, no; I don't want you yet, go with that gentleman, if he'll have you."

"That I will!" said Leicester, laying his hand upon Stumpy's arm. "He has been faithful and honest to me, let the rest of the world say what it will."

"Guthrie with him then, sir," said Mr. Dockett, and he turned, with a cheerful nod, to the village.

Stumpy, however, ran after him, and, laying one hand upon the side of the cart, whispered a few words in the detective's ear.

"Eh?" said Mr. Dockett. "The General's not dead! But true? Cannot?" and his eyes sparkled.

"Where is he?"

But Stumpy, having succeeded in exciting the hitherto calm officer into something like eagerness, ran back and joined Leicester, leaving Mr. Dockett driving towards the village and muttering:

"Not dead! Is it true, I wonder? How can it be? I should like to have the calling of him. So the General's not dead! It's too good to be true!"

(To be continued.)

BURIED SECRETS.

CHAPTER XIV.

St. Andrew's Church was a little old building, of the plainest possible architecture, shut in between tall warehouses, in a very narrow street, in a very secluded region, half a mile from the lodgings of "Mademoiselle Zoe." It seemed totally out of place amid its surroundings, and had an aspect of having been overlooked and forgotten by church-going people. Very few persons, and those only labouring people, came to worship in the little spireless edifice.

Lolette had often noticed this church, and once in passing had stopped within and gazed about her in simple curiosity. Here was no pomp nor display; no stained glass windows; no crucifixes; no gilding; and frework. The benches were bare, the pulpit was severe in its simplicity, the windows darkened by the close proximity to the warehouses, and covered over with cobwebs, were of cheap glass. The walls were plainly whitewashed. The girl had remembered this visit, and in considering her marriage had thought first of all of this little old church.

Upon the second Sunday subsequent to her betrothal Miss Lolette stole into St. Andrew's Church and took her place among the handful of worshippers. A poor young curate read the service. At the proper moment he read the notice that had been handed him, and the banns of marriage between Piers Dalzell, bachelor, and Lolette Ryan, spinster were duly published.

"He means it all too soon!" the girl thought, joyfully. "Only two Sundays more! I shall come every time. I'm to be a lady—a rich lady. Oh, it is too good to be true!"

Every night during the week Dalzell came to Bingley's to see her home. The girl began incessantly to lose some of her coarseness and rudeness. She was softer in her manners, pleasanter, less ready to take fire at a chance word, and Dalzell grew encouraged.

The next Sunday also was at St. Andrew's again. Upon this occasion she found a group of poor women gathered around a little notice tacked to a pillar near the entrance. She joined the group, read the notice, and discovered that it was a written publication of the banns spoken on Sunday—a notification to all whom it might concern that Piers Dalzell and Lolette Ryan contemplated matrimony. Flushing and smiling, the large, red cheeked, bold-eyed brunette sought her seat. The banns were read again upon that day.

And every night during the ensuing week Dalzell attended his betrothed home from the concert-hall.

as heretofore, flattering her and keeping her in high good nature.

It was during this last week of probation that, during his drive with Lord Thorncombe in the park, Dalyell obtained a glimpse of Diana Paulot, as described.

That pure, noble, high-bred face haunted his memory throughout the evening and for days afterward.

He returned to Thorncombe House with the earl, was present at an interview between his lordship and Mr. Keene, the solicitor, in which the mystery of Mrs. Ryan's disappearance and the possible whereabouts of the heiress were thoroughly and fruitlessly discussed, and he smiled furtively at the thought that he held in his own possession the secret which they would give so much to know.

"I'll disclose it in my own good time," he thought; "when I'm safely married, and when I have polished up the girl into the semblance of a lady. To present her to them as my wife as she is now, rude, coarse and ignorant, and to proclaim the truth, that I know her identity and married her for her fortune. No, I must train her, make something of her, teach her, make a lady of her if possible, and they may then believe me when I declare that I married her for love. Art, my dear fellow—there's nothing like art."

Mr. Keene departed at half-past ten, and the earl retired to his own rooms. Dalyell soon after quitted the house, taking his evening walk to the music hall.

Mademoiselle Zoe was in high favour with her audience upon this evening, having to repeat her dances twice and sing two or three additional comic songs. The delightful strains of the "Ratcatcher's Daughter" floated out to the ears of Dalyell, as, moody and discontented, he paced the passage-way and listened at the green baize door.

"And next week," he thought, gnawing his upper lip, savagely, "I shall be standing here just as I am doing now, listening to that voice singing those odious ballads, and the singer will be my wife! Mrs. Piers Dalyell! My blood boils at the very thought. Mrs. Piers Dalyell singing 'the Jolly Young Waterman,' or 'Sally in our Alley,' or 'Tommy Dodd,' or that Ratcatcher song to a lot of beer-guzzlers, cads and what not! I ought to compel her to quit the concert-saloon at our marriage, but she has a frightful temper, and would throw me over sooner. She pretends it's a point of honour with her. She has given her word to Bingley to stay six months longer. But she doesn't know the meaning of that word honour, except in a savage sort of way. She means to stay because the admiration of that low crowd, their coarse applause and the excitement of it all are necessary to her happiness! What a lady of Thorncombe Manor she will make!"

Dalyell was right in his judgment of Miss Lolette. She had boasted of a determination to keep her agreement with Bingley as a point of honour. In reality, she would have broken her word in a moment if she had felt an impulse to do so. But during all her childhood and early youth it had been the one ambition of her life to attain some kind of position behind the footlights. Her ambition had not been high. With her humble bringing-up, it could not be expected to soar far above her own experiences. As "star" at Bingley's she was perfectly content. She would not have exchanged places with the most celebrated actress of the time. In her own estimation she was great—the greatest dancer and singer of her day.

What she might have been had she been carefully trained by wise and loving hands from her infancy, instructed by masters and governesses, accustomed to luxury and to gentle society can never be known.

What she was now Dalyell understood very clearly. Headstrong, obstinate, wilful, vain, fretful, undisciplined, fond of her own way, incapable of a great affection, profoundly selfish, her mind ignorant and unbalanced, her heart a merely physical organ, she had but the one virtue we have indicated—that virtue of self respect which distinguishes the most uncivilized of women—the Indian of North America, the wild Bedouin girl, or the black-eyed gipsy of English lanes and commons.

"Education might have made her like the Lady Janes and Lady Arabellas I see in West End drawing-rooms," thought Dalyell; "but under the polish that might have been put upon her I fancy the Tartar would still exist. She has a poor and sterile nature. I suppose she inherited it from her mother, though George Berwyn did not possess a very brilliant mind. Well, when she marries she'll find her master!"

He walked to and fro, raging at the shouts and plaudits aroused by Mademoiselle Zoe's performance, but his face cleared somewhat when the door at last opened and Miss Lolette came forth, in her shabby waterproof cloak, and joined him.

They walked down the street together, he silent, she chattering gleefully of her triumphs of the evening, and exhibiting a bouquet, which she declared to be the finest and largest of all her floral trophies.

"Fling it away!" said Dalyell. "You don't want it, Lolette. I'll buy you a bigger and a finer one to-morrow."

Miss Lolette shook her head, preferring to retain her "bird in the hand."

"I'm having a white dress made in Tottenham Court Road," she observed, with a little tittering laugh, "and a tulle veil, and a wreath, all for five pounds. They are to be sent to Sarah Bump's lodgings next Monday night, and I shall stay all night with her, and she'll go to church with me in the morning. I've told her that I'm to be married to a swell."

"But you promised secrecy."

"She's the only one I've told. I had to tell somebody. I won't get married at all if I can't be married in white, and mother's taken to watching me lately, kind of suspicious, so I don't dare have the things sent home."

"But what can your mother be suspicious of?" questioned Dalyell.

"I don't know. I rather think she's got an idea that you are making love to me. She asked me yesterday if you came home with me every night. She looked at the bracelets and ring you gave me and muttered, in a puzzled kind of way, 'Curious, curious.' I suppose she thinks it curious that a gentleman should wait on a girl in my station. But she never heard of that King Coffey you was telling me about, that married the beggar maid. Won't she open her eyes one of these days!"

Dalyell charged her again and again to the strictest secrecy and attended her to the corner nearest her home, watching until she had entered her lodgings.

"It won't do to let Mrs. Flint suspect there's any underhand work going on," he thought. "If she knew that I was about to marry the girl secretly, she'd suspect that the girl is really heiress to something or other. 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' she'd hit on something like the truth in her first guess."

But Mrs. Flint was even more astute than he or Lolette imagined. She was particularly wide awake at the present juncture, as will be presently seen.

The week passed, slowly to Lolette, rapidly to Dalyell. He felt like a man awaiting execution. He was elegant in person, fastidious in his tastes, and was about to marry a low-bred, ignorant woman, of whom he would be ashamed every day of their lives, whom he now absolutely loathed and hated at times, but yet whose prospective fortune was a loadstone of attraction he could not resist—a prize worth many humiliations and annoyances to win.

On the following Sunday the banns were published for the third time. The marriage was fixed for Tuesday morning. Monday night came at last. Miss Lolette informed her foster-mother, before going out to her usual evening engagement, that she should not return home until the next day, as she purposed speeding the night and the following forenoon "with a friend."

"What friend?" demanded Mrs. Flint, sharply.

"Sarah Bump, if you must know," replied Miss Lolette. "I don't know as it's any of your particular business. I am twenty years old, and my own mistress, as I suppose you are aware."

"Well yes, I am aware," said Mrs. Flint, grimly.

"When will you be home, Lolly?"

"I said to-morrow," said Miss Lolette, indifferently, "but I meant next day. Sarah and I may make a little excursion out Bushy Park way, or down to Greenwich or Gravesend, or some such, to-morrow, and I may go home with her again to-morrow night after the concert, as we'll be tired out."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Flint. "Do you think it proper for two young things like you to go off gallivanting in that style, without an older person to look after you?"

"We're old enough to take care of ourselves," said Miss Lolette, with a toss of her head and a deepening of colour in her hard red cheeks. "Don't you fret yourself about us."

Mrs. Flint observed, furtively, that her foster daughter had decorated her person with all the ornaments she had in her possession; that she put her small store of money in her wallet, and that she wore her best garments, a flimsy blue silk gown, trimmed with black cotton lace, bought, we regret to say, at a secondhand clothes shop.

Miss Lolette journeyed by omnibus to Blackfriars Road, in fine spirits. After the usual performance, at eleven o'clock, Dalyell escorted her to the lodgings of Miss Bump, in the Borough.

As they came to a halt on the doorstep of Miss Bump's abode Mrs. Flint slipped into an adjoining

doorway, quite within earshot, and listened to the words of their parting.

"Sarah Bump says that my white dress, and wreath, and veil, were sent home at five o'clock in a paper box, and they look just scrumptious! My! Won't you be proud of me to-morrow?"

"Indeed I will!" said Dalyell, gallantly, but with a secret grimace. "You'll be the handsomest bride in all London. Mind, you take a cab at ten o'clock, or not later than half-past. The curate of St. Andrew's says that the ceremony must take place before noon, and he'd like us to come very early. I shall be at the church waiting for you—"

"And we are to spend the day at the Crystal Palace!" interrupted the girl. "I'm beginning my new life in right good style! You ought to see how I threw mother off the coat—he, he! I shall wear my bridal gown to Sydenham!"

Dalyell winced, but he did not venture upon an argument. He was willing to take his bride upon her own terms, with the intention of modifying those terms to suit himself thereafter.

"You must gratify your own tastes; your wish is my law," he said, smiling. "Make yourself look like a lady as neatly as you can, that is all I ask, my own love. And now you must go to your beauty-sleep, my dearest. I cannot afford to keep my bride out in the night-air longer!"

He drew her to him and kissed her, with such secret loathing of her that it was well for him she could not read his heart. She giggled, and laid her head on his shoulder, and he put her from him, with more compliments and a greater loathing than ever.

"Be sure and be at St. Andrew's before ten o'clock, my own love," he said.

"I will be sure," she answered. "As sure as time itself!"

"And so will I!" thought Mrs. Flint, in her concealment. "So it's a marriage, is it? What's the dodge he's up to? I mean to find out."

The girl went into the house.

Dalyell walked hurriedly down the street. It is safe to say that never man hated his bride-elect like this one, or found his task of securing a fortune more loathsome. But he did not falter in his resolve. The morrow should make her his bride!

Mrs. Flint stole out of her hiding-place and went home, chuckling like some bird of ill omen.

"To-morrow!" she said, with a queer giggle. "To-morrow! And he's going to marry Lolly! Well, I'll be there!"

CHAPTER XV.

As the clocks struck ten upon the following morning Piers Dalyell alighted from his cab at the door of St. Andrew's Church.

He was dressed in irreproachable morning costume, a trifle grave for a bridegroom perhaps, but he did not care to announce to other visitors at the Crystal Palace that he was fresh from the church altar. Despite the fact that he had schooled and prayed for this hour, he was ashamed of himself, ashamed of his intended wife, and at war with the whole world.

He entered the plain, humble little church.

The hard-worked curate was in waiting, and two or three persons, sexton, pew-opener, and the like, were grouped near the chancel. Several working girls, who had been passing and who had seen the door ajar, had been swift to ascend a wedding, and had ensconced themselves on the front benches. A beggar woman and her children stood near the poor, as expecting to be cast out, yet desirous of witnessing what should transpire.

Piers Dalyell contemplated the small but motley assemblage with a thrill of keen disgust.

He had thought to make a brilliant marriage some day, but he had always associated the possible event in his own mind with St. George's Church, Hanover Square, with the soft music of the Wedding March, with a throng of splendidly dressed women and stately men, with long lines of carriages, a great display of gifts and a departure for some great country seat, the property of the imagined bride or the loan of some of her noble relatives.

And here he was, to be married in this secluded church, to a low concert singer, and his bridal tour was to be a trip to the Crystal Palace; and he was Dalyell of the clubs, a man of fashion, heir-expectant, until recently, of a rent-roll of twenty thousand a year!

But—and the reflection kindled his cold and calculating nature into a fierce glow—the "low concert singer" was a descendant of one of the proudest families in England, the heiress of the estates and rent-roll he coveted, and upon the death of the Earl of Thorncombe she would inherit also the title, for in this case title and estates would descend together even to the "distaff line."

"My wife will be Countess of Thorncombe in her

own right," he thought, as he walked slowly up the dim aisle. "There have been no marriage settlements. Her income will be mine absolutely. If I tire of her I can spend the money without the encumbrance of her society."

He advanced to the chancel and greeted the curate politely. The bride and her party had not arrived. Possessing his soul with what patience he could, he talked with the curate and walked to and fro and started at every opening and closing of the door, and grew annoyed as he observed that other people were straggling in and taking possession of the benches, people with parcels of every size, people who desired to brighten their hard-working lives with the sight of a happy young pair taking upon themselves the vows of matrimony. The clocks struck eleven.

"Perdition!" breathed Dalyell, growing pale. "Can she have repented? Can the old woman have got wind of the affair and have told her who she is? By Jove, I'll have to go after her. I'm afraid the prize has slipped through my hands!" A cold sweat broke out upon his face.

The curate and the humble church officials marked his perturbation, and the former was about to address him when the rumbling of wheels was heard on the street pavement, and directly thereafter the doors opened and the bridal party entered. The party consisted of Miss Ryan and her friend, Miss Bump, without any male attendant whatever. The former became on the instant the cynosure of all eyes.

She preceded her friend up the aisle, walking with a swagger that was meant for easy grace. She was dressed like a bride, but with certain additions to her toilet, the result of her own taste and therefore strikingly original.

She wore a long white dress of Swiss muslin, elaborately trimmed, and a short white skirt beneath it, so that at every step her thick ancles, clad in striped stockings, were plainly revealed. A long tulle veil depended from a wreath of very artificial white flowers. A Roman striped sash was wound around her buxom waist. Her shoulders were bare, the robe being very low in the neck, and several strings of wax pearls lay upon her brown skin like so many drops of spermaceti. Other strings of wax pearls were wound in her black hair, falling upon her forehead. On her arms were the Palais Royal "diamonds," with which she was wont to dazzle the eyes of the frequenters of Bingley's. Her hands were encased in bright pink gloves, and half-a-dozen rings were worn upon her fingers outside the gloves. And finally, her face had been powdered and painted in artistic style, and a pair of red glass earrings had been suspended in her ears.

Such was the bride fastidious Piers Dalyell stepped forward to lead to the altar! It is scarcely to be wondered at that he recoiled from her and contented himself with walking by her side in a silent rage.

It is said that every woman looks beautiful once in her life—on her wedding-day. But poor Lolette had never shown to such ill advantage, thanks to her execrable taste in dress. Her form looked heavy, large and awkward; her hands larger than Dalyell's; her brown complexion was hidden under cosmetics, her bold black eyes looking bolder than ever, scanning the church and its inmates composedly, as if she were in her own parlour and these her familiar guests.

They took their places before the altar.

And just then the door again opened, and Mrs. Flint crept in and took her place upon a bench near the door.

The beautiful marriage ceremony of the Church of England was read by the curate, the usual questions were asked. No one interposed any objections to the match, Mrs. Flint keeping her place in silence, and with a peculiar look on her face, an odd expression of cunning in her eyes, and the sexton gave away the bride.

Miss Lolette removed her gloves with considerable difficulty to admit of the marriage-ring being placed upon her finger. Her responses were loud and emphatic, reaching even to the hearing of Mrs. Flint near the door.

The ceremony was over. Lolette Ryan and Piers Dalyell were lawfully married, and side by side they followed the curate into the vestry to sign the marriage register. The witnesses in turn followed them. Mrs. Flint arose from the seat and proceeded to the vestry also.

Bride and bridegroom had signed their names, and the witnesses were following their example. Dalyell drew the curate aside and pressed upon him a handsome fee, and bestowed gratuities also upon the sexton and pew-opener.

"It's as run a marriage as ever I saw," whispered the latter to the sexton. "He's a regular swell.

She—what is she? Not his kind, that's clear. She must have an awful lot of money to tempt him to marry her!"

The curate was on the point of closing the register when Mrs. Ryan glided in like a shadow, a smile on her face.

"Shall I sign too?" she asked. "I'm a witness!" Dalyell sprang backwards, muttering an imprecation. He would have suspected his bride of having taken her mother into her confidence, but Lolette gave a shrill scream of genuine amazement at the sight of her foster-mother and seemed overwhelmed with dismay.

"Mother!" she gasped, as soon as she could speak: "You here?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Flint, calmly. "Where should I be but here where you are being married? You thought you were mighty secret, Lolly, but I tracked you out. And so you are married? You're a deep one, Mr. Dalyell—a very deep one!"

Dalyell had regained his composure. He saw that the curate and others were listening and wondering. He dreaded a scene that should find its way into the newspapers. So he drew Mrs. Flint aside into the corner, and said to her:

"Not a word, my good woman. As you see I've married Lolette. So long as you keep our secret and a still tongue in your head you have a claim upon me. A gossiping, and I'll give you over into the hands of the police. I'm quite sure that in the course of your career you have done something for which they'd like to see you."

Mrs. Flint paid no heed to this threatening.

"What made you marry Lolly?" she asked.

"I married her for love."

The woman glanced from one to the other of the bridal pair, and grinned insolently.

"Tell that to the marines," she exclaimed. "You married her because I told you that she was Blanche Berwyn. Has a fortune fallen to Blanche?"

"No. My cousin is poor. I tell you I married for love."

"And I don't believe you. No more I don't believe Blanche Berwyn is your cousin. And I do believe she's had a fortune left her. Keep your own counsel, Mr. Dalyell, but I'll know your secret yet. Mind that! You'd better take me into partnership. I'd be a dangerous enemy."

"Leave us," said Dalyell, imperiously. "I'll see you this evening."

"That you will, for I'm going where you go to-day. I've a good deal to say to you, all in good time, sir, but you may as well know now that where Lolly goes I go too. If she's to live in clover, I shall also. We're to have the same house. Thank Heaven, my working days are over. You'll have to support me as long as I live, Mr. Dalyell!"

And Mrs. Flint surveyed him much as a spider surveys a captive fly.

Dalyell turned from her to his bride.

"Lolette," he said, and there was a tone of command in his voice which the girl had never heard in it before. "I have ordered a dinner to be prepared for us at the Crystal Palace. I bought yesterday a costume for you at a West End shop, and it was to be forwarded to Miss Bump's lodgings at eleven o'clock to-day. It must be there now. If you go anywhere with me to-day, you will wash the paint off your face and put on the garments I bought for you. Do you understand?"

His black eyes glittered. The girl's eyes fell before his. There was a conflict in her mind, her savage temper urging her not to yield, but the temptations of a day at the Crystal Palace were too much for her. She gave in sullenly.

Dalyell's cab conveyed the bride and bridegroom and Mrs. Flint and Miss Bump to the lodgings of the latter.

The costume Dalyell had ordered was found to have arrived. It proved to be a very elegant walking costume of brown silk, with hat and gloves to match, and the bride, upon penalty of spending the day alone with her friend, was forced to don it, which she did with many angry protestations that she would yet "get even with him," meaning Dalyell. She was even obliged to wear a small lace veil, another indignity for which her husband was to suffer hereafter.

The ill-assorted party departed for the Crystal Palace, all silent and sullen, with the exception of Miss Bump, who was very boisterous in her talk and laughter.

The run down to Sydenham was made quickly. As they walked up through the palace grounds, on their way to the building, they paused to contemplate the huge stone monsters, representing animals of the antediluvian period, which were stationed near the lakes.

Dalyell was moody and ill at ease. Miss Bump made some very funny remarks concerning the great

megatherium, and Lolette had responded to it by a very loud laugh, when a little family party came suddenly upon them.

The party consisted of Mr. Lookham—the returned Australian—and his wife and children!

The eyes of Mr. Lookham beheld only one of the group of four, and that one was the shabby woman in black, Mrs. Flint. With a cry of amazement he bounded towards her, crying out:

"I have found you at last, Mrs. Ryan! Ah, now I've got you!"

The woman had seemed stupefied at the sight of him. As he leaped towards her she gave a shrill shriek and sped away. He ran after her, overtook her, and seized upon her in a fierce and nervous grip.

"Yes, it's you, sure enough!" he exclaimed, dragging her back towards the spot where she had been standing when he recognised her. "It's you, Joanna Ryan! And now what have you got to say for yourself? Where's the child? Where is Blanche Berwyn?"

(To be continued.)

SLEEP.

THERE is a law of periodic rest, which is universal in its application. The successive periods of creation are distinguished by an alternate evening and morning—a night of repose followed by a day of activity. After the nebulous matter that had been "without form and void," had become condensed into a solid mass, for a time "Darkness was upon the face of the deep," and the great watery ball swung dead and silent in the expanse. Interior fires smoulder quietly in their central oven; the waters—tideless and waveless—slumber peacefully above; while the creative spirit broods over the placid bosom of the deep. At last, the word is said: "Let there be light!" the darkness vanishes, morning breaks, and the round world shines like a globe of silver.

Then there comes another long night of stillness and repose, during which the elements are preparing themselves for a further period of activity and life. The inner fire has been melting, fusing, crystallizing, and gradually weakening the superincumbent strata, when suddenly the depths of the sea are troubled, and islands, continents and mountains are heaved up into the air, while the waters subside into the valleys. Then the winds begin to blow, the rain descends upon the rough rocks, wearing away their surface, electric and chemical forces prepare the way for vegetable life, and a rank verdure, in process of time, covers the face of the earth. As the evening of this third day draws on, there comes another grand convulsion, and the ferns and the flowers, and the huge trees, sink down into the depths, there to be changed into carbon and stored away to meet the necessities of the age in which we live. And so it proceeded, by alternate seasons of rest and action, until all things were finished, and man appeared upon the stage.

The same law still prevails in every department of nature. Every year the trees strip off the covering which they had worn, the earth wraps itself up in its coverlet of snow, and the silent slumber of winter reigns profound. Every day the flower that followed the sun so lovingly while he shone, folds its little hands at evening and bends its head and sleeps. Here and there we find a rollicking cœna that never opens its painted doors until night-fall; but like all who revel in the darkness, it must rest at noon-day.

The winds and the waters sleep,—well for us that they do,—but the sounder they sleep, the more terrible they are when they wake,—the profounder the calm, the fiercer the hurricane which follows. Even the metals need to have their periodic rest,—an iron wheel kept in incessant motion for too long a period of time loses its cohesive power and flies in pieces.

It is also said that stone, if it were exposed to constant sunlight, and with no chance to sleep at night, would become disintegrated and crumble away. Every organ of the human body needs to have its special season. The lungs must have their brief period of repose, between each successive inspiration; the heart pauses for an instant in the interval between each pulsation; and every one knows to his sorrow that if the digestive functions are forced to work too steadily they will avenge themselves upon the gourmandizer. But for this fact, many of the organs of the body would get no rest at all, for, during our ordinary sleep, the involuntary actions of the body continue in exercise; and in some cases even the power of locomotion may be complete while all the bodily senses are wrapped in slumber.

In what that ordinary sleep consists it is not easy to say. Of course every one knows what it is, as a

matter of experience, although no man was ever conscious of the precise moment when he fell into oblivion. We all know that it is to be asleep, when we feel that we ought to be wide awake, and what it is to be awake when we ought to be asleep.

There are certain positions of the body which are favourable to sleep, and yet, when they are very weary, soldiers may slumber while on the march, couriers while on horseback, and many a person falls asleep bolt upright in his chair, while engaged in trying to read a heavy article. Some people have much greater aptitude for sleep than others, and here and there one is found who makes it a deliberate business to doze away a large portion of his life like the somnolent Iberian, who, when asked by his employer how he could manage to sleep so much, replied: "Sir, I pay attention to it." A man who is used to it will slumber as soundly inside of a copper boiler, while a dozen hammers are driving rivets on the outside, as he would anywhere else, and is liable to wake only when the clatter suddenly ceases.

It has been remarked that if one should lie down on a revolving wheel, he would fall into a sound sleep, from which he would soon be liable to sink into the arms of death. I was once rocked into a sleep that became almost comatose while floating passively on a warm day on the billowy waves of the ocean, and was carried off by the retreating tide so far from the shore as to make it very difficult to swim back again. It is a singular fact that criminals generally sleep soundly on the night before their execution, when they know that it is to be their last sleep on earth.

The operations of the mind, when the senses are locked in slumber, are mysterious and inscrutable. Some say that the mind never sleeps, and that it is only the suspense of memory that prevents us from recalling all its operations during the period of bodily slumber. But if the brain never rests, it would wear out prematurely, and soon become useless.

In our ordinary dreams there is the same sense of reality which we have in the affairs of our waking life. And yet we may have a sort of vague consciousness that there is something incongruous and absurd in the strange things which seem to be going on around us. Sometimes we have a dream within a dream, or dream that we are dreaming, and the faculty of reason is tolerably wide awake while other powers of mind run riot.

It may also be noted that although the fancy brings other people before us, who are manufactured for the occasion, and may also put elaborate arguments into their mouths, which we are incompetent to answer, we never suppose ourselves to be other than we are—never lose the consciousness of our personal identity. I believe that we rarely, if ever, are aware of any distinct exercise of memory in our dreams—never recall things as belonging to the past. The visions of the night are in a great degree built up out of our old experiences and impressions, but they always assume the aspect of something present and palpable.

If the limits to which we are restricted allowed I would be glad to enlarge upon these inexplicable phenomena, and also speak of the complicated problems that have been solved, the wonderful poems composed, and the beautiful music conceived, during the hours of sleep. I am inclined to think that some people have their brightest time when their senses are locked in slumber. And what a wondrous thing life would be if there were no alternation of evening and morning, no periodical season of rest, no quiet hour, when we may lose sight of this bustling, anxious, toilsome world. B. C.

LITTLE COURTESIES.—The art of "living" together" pleasantly is greatly promoted by the habitual exchanges of the little courtesies of this life; they are never unimportant, never unacceptable, are always grateful to the feeling in every household. Shall brothers and sisters be less careful of the feelings of one another than those of a stranger? And between a husband and wife should there be less effort at gentleness of deportment, civility of manner and courtesy of expression, than is extended to outsiders, who have no special claims and may never be seen again? Shame upon any member of any family who neglects these affectionate attentions and those civilities of deportment toward the members of the household, and even to the lowest servant, which cannot fail to elevate the giver, and to draw from the receiver those willing and spontaneous reciprocities which make of family associations a little heaven below.

TO PRESERVE A BOUQUET.—When you receive a bouquet, sprinkle it with fresh water; then put it into a vessel containing some soap-suds, which nourish the roots and keep the flowers as good as new. Take the bouquet out of the suds every morning, and put it in fresh water; keep it there a minute

or two, then take it out and sprinkle the flowers lightly by the hand with pure water. Replace the bouquet in soap-suds, and the flowers will bloom as fresh as when gathered. The soap-suds needs to be changed every third day. By observing these rules, a bouquet may be kept bright and beautiful for at least one month, and will last longer in a very passable state; but the attention to the fair but frail creatures, as directed above, must be strictly observed, or "the last rose of summer" will not be "left blooming alone," but will perish.

PRIDE.

THE raven admiring himself with peacock's feathers, and then looking with contempt on his own kind.

A rotten rung in life's ladder, which often brings us to the ground.

The sparkling of a mock diamond.

Like an angel it may soar high, but can never reach heaven.

A weed which often grows the highest in the lowest situation.

A transparent varnish used by the foolish to cover their defects.

A display without, to celebrate the death of common sense within.

HAPPINESS.

We are in the habit of hearing people say, in view of any little disappointment, "Oh, well it won't do to be too happy." A careless speech, which, however, it sometimes seems, has its justification in the curious blending of the agreeable and the disagreeable that prevails the world over. Do you object to the keen cold of the North? Go South, and find snakes and centipedes. Even in Rome, where the very ruins are more glorious than the best achievements of the rest of the world, and within them how doth the little busy flea improve each shifting hour? California is less talked about now as the land of gold than as the land of perfect atmosphere. The air there is a real delight to breathe. It exhilarates you. It is a perpetual champagne, which never quite intoxicates. One enthusiastic writer has said lately that the crowning misery of was to die in California, because you must cease to breathe that air of balm which made you long to live for ever.

But think of the nuisances there which offset this enchanting climate! Ants are one. Frequently food can only be preserved by hanging it up in bags, or placing it in euphorbia which stand on legs inserted in vessels of water. Summer brings its plagues of impalpable dust, and winter one of fathomless mud—fleas are as busy as in Rome, and in their season mosquitoes and gnats hold high carnival. So the most conscientious person who had a sensitive skin, as well as a sensitive conscience, might, after all, seek that intoxicating air without much danger of being too happy there.

FORTUNE'S FAVOURS.

NANNY had been her nickname for so many years now that even her sisters' children employed it without the slightest idea that it was not quite respectful. The Scotch gardener and his wife, who had been in the family since before she was born—forgot which name really belonged to her, and called her Miss Nanny without either she or they being aware of it.

The appellation had been given by her elder sisters, when she was a mere child. Some old relative had bequeathed her a little legacy, so the two girls called her Nanny; and the name so tickled their fancy that they continued it till it became a matter of fixed habit. She had been christened Angelina, but I do not suppose she had ever written the appalling engagement a dozen times in her whole life.

Her two sisters married while quite young, and both were supposed to have done remarkably well; but a few years proved that in each case a terrible mistake had been made; it would have been impossible for either to have fallen upon a more unfortunate choice.

Nanny was a little past eighteen when the troubles of her two sisters began. A short time before that she had formed the acquaintance of a charming young fellow, some six years older than herself. He was of good family, well-to-do in the world, a great favourite with everybody.

Nanny had been at the head of her father's establishment since her sisters left home. The mother died almost before Nanny's remembrance; but Mr. Mitchell's heart lay buried too deep in the grave of his beloved wife for any thought of bringing a new mistress into his house ever to enter his mind. He was a Scotchman by birth, a lawyer by profession, and had amassed a large fortune. He gave up business before his oldest daughter married, and retired

to a country seat in the heart of picturesque Devonshire, where the family had been in the habit always of passing the summer.

The old mansion stood near a bustling town. There was agreeable society to be had, and when the girls wished for a few weeks of gaiety in the winter, there were friends and distant relations glad enough to invite them to their houses in London.

But before the twins married Nanny had been too young to be allowed such distractions; and after that, her father was always too ailing for her to be willing to leave him alone. Then, too, she was shy, and shrank from strangers. She had not the slightest claim even to being considered pretty. Her sisters were beautiful, but Nanny, as a girl, was positively plain. She seemed to have inherited all the characteristics, physically, of her Scotch ancestry. Her legs and arms were too long, her cheek-bones too high, her mouth too large, and her hair too sandy. But everybody was fond of Nanny, and her face was so full of sweetness and intelligence that I think people who knew her well were always astonished to hear strangers pronounce her ugly.

So, when she was eighteen, Jack Everton and she met; and handsome Jack fell in love with her, and Nanny was greatly attracted toward him.

Mr. Mitchell liked Everton, he was made welcome at the house, and glided into a footing of intimacy before he or anybody else really realized the fact. The married sisters' troubles began, and Mr. Mitchell suddenly roused himself to look more closely after the future of his youngest child. Jack Everton came and asked him if he might hope one day to become his son-in-law; and just then the old gentleman, for the first time, gained an inkling of his dissipated habits. He told Nanny what he had heard, but Nanny did not believe it. He told Jack, and Jack did not deny the fact, but avowed that he had given up all that sort of thing, and abjured henceforth prays "as sober as a church," and was so frank, and honest, and earnest, that even Mr. Mitchell, suspicious as the twins' misfortunes were rendering him, could not help trusting the young man.

Nanny became conditionally engaged to him. If he kept perfectly steady during two years, he was to have her for his wife. But it was Nanny herself—not the father—who at length broke off the engagement. Weak Jack could not keep his pledge; he fell once, and was pardoned, erred again, and he was looked over.

"I have told Jack that I shall never marry him," she said, to her father.

The old man did his best to lighten her trouble by love and silent sympathy.

Everton went off to California.

"Nanny!" wrote her sisters, contrasting her existence with theirs.

For a good while after, the playful pet-name struck Nanny's ear with a thrill of pain; but she never asked that it should be given up.

The years went on. Mr. Mitchell died. Nanny continued to live in the old home. At last the eldest sister was obliged to have a legal separation from her husband. She had two children, and it would be a sin longer to leave them exposed to the influence of that most degraded species of brute—a human being whose vice has sunk below the level of humanity.

She and her children came back to live with Nanny. The second sister struggled on as best she could, under her troubles, living away off in the South-west, not permitted, for years and years even, to visit or hold communication with her relatives. At last, and then the widow wandered back to her girlhood's home, bringing her four children with her.

Mr. Mitchell's prudent will had restrained the two husbands from utterly wasting the fortunes their wives had received; a great deal was gone, but there remained enough for ease and comfort.

Mrs. Walters—the widow—bought a house near the homestead, which had been bequeathed to Nanny; and the sisters, once more united and loving one another fondly, settled down close together, to make the best they could of life.

Nanny was thirty-five when the three were again joined. She had grown plump, her nose looked smaller, her cheek-bones were less prominent, and her face had an expression of cheerful content and enjoyment which was better than beauty.

"Nanny!" cried the twins, staring dimly in each other's face at the dire havoc years of wretchedness had worked in the loveliness of which they had once been so innocently proud; then gazing back at the younger sister's countenance, so full of vivacity and interest in all about her, so full of hope and faith. "Nanny!"

And Nanny could smile, while tears of thankfulness for herself, and sympathy for her sisters, filled

her eyes. She could listen to the childish nick-name without a pang now. Ah, how few of us men and women could do that, Nanny!

Five years had gone by since the widowed sister came back. Nanny was forty years old, but, certainly during the past decade she did not seem to have changed. There was not a wrinkle on her forehead, not a thread of white in her hair, which had somehow darkened a little, and was really a pretty brown, and her cheeks were as pink as a girl's when she blushed, and to this day Nanny blushed as easily as if she were sixteen. Her nephews used to delight in teasing her, just for the pleasure of seeing the rosy-tinted mount to her cheeks, inventing all sorts of dreadful stories about her coquettish and imprudences, and she would defend herself earnestly at first, and blush horribly, before taking time to remember that it was all a joke.

The boys adored Nanny. They were growing great fellows—off most of the year at college or school, and making a delightful pandemonium of the two houses when they came home. Nanny was their adviser and confidant. Neither of them had a secret where she was concerned; and Nanny's patience with their whims was inexhaustible. There were no girls in either of the families, and the two mothers could never congratulate themselves sufficiently on the fact, though Nanny murmured a little sometimes.

"Don't be so wicked!" Mrs. Walters would say. "It is an awful thing to have girls."

"And to see them grow up, and know they must be unhappy," the other twin would add.

"All women are not wretched," the youngest would reply.

"Oh, it is all very well for you to talk, Miss Nanny!"

"A life in ten thousand, Nanny!"

Then Mrs. Howard would rebel, and feel bitter and wicked as she looked back over her past; and Mrs. Walters, formed in a weaker mould, would cry a little, and Nanny would soothe them both into quietude.

But, sooner or later, such talk would come up again, and Nanny never could resist saying:

"All the same; I wish we had a nice little girl."

Nanny had visions of adopting one; but when her sisters found it out they lightened her so sorely that she yielded to their superior wisdom, and did not take the child, an orphan baby, in whose mother she had always been greatly interested.

"The idea!" cried Mrs. Howard. "Getting everything else aside, what on earth do you know about taking care of a baby?"

"I am very handy with them," said Nanny, meekly; "and I think any woman must know by instinct. I am an fond of babies."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the sisters, in concert.

The two laughed, till Nanny's cheeks got as pink as blush-roses, though she laughed too.

"I did not think how it sounded," said she. "All the same, I wish I had a baby—a beautiful little girl-baby, with eyes like yours, Mary, and hair just the colour Emma's was."

"Don't talk of my eyes," exclaimed Mrs. Howard. "They have stared so many years at misery that they look like a madwoman's."

"And my hair. It is whiter than papa's was at sixty," moaned Mrs. Walters, and wiped away a tear.

The two sisters gazed at each other, and shivered as their thoughts wandered back over the awful blackness of the past. Nanny knew what was in their minds, and she said, softly:

"Only think, the boys will be at home to-morrow—such good boys." So she brought them back to cheerfulness, and finally made them laugh again by adding, "I shall have to wait till they bring me babies of their kind."

"Dear me," Mrs. Howard said, "how the time goes; my Robert is twenty."

"He'll be falling in love first, you know," said Nanny.

"Don't you go putting such notions in his head, you dreadful old maid!" cried his mother. "He is only a boy."

"Papa married when he was twenty-one," returned Nanny; and her mind was still so full of the orphan child (whose remembrance troubled her conscience, though she had provided for its welfare) that she projected her soul into the future to seek a vision of her tall, handsome Robert, with a wife for her to pet, and was once to spoil, and suddenly burst out, "Robert's babies would be such pretty creatures, you know."

"Command me to old maids for having such strange ideas," laughed Mrs. Howard, though all the while her motherly jealousy was a little roused at the bare idea of Robert married.

"I can't help it," said Nanny. "I'll try not to

think about having any myself if it shocks you; but I vow I will think about the time when I shall be a great-aunt, and if the boys' babies are not girls I'll never forgive my nephews' wives."

The next day the whole troop returned to spend their vacation; and a very happy summer it was, even to the somewhat gloomy-viewed mothers. As for Nanny, the boys declared she grew younger each day. Having their society, being obliged to attend to their comfort, to read with them, walk with them, join them in every possible expedition, and never getting a moment to herself from morning till night, always did Nanny great good. She was by nature and habit an active woman; had everybody that was ill or suffering on her shoulders, hosts of visitors in the house; still, when the boys were absent she found time occasionally to feel a little sad and lonely. She knew that it was silly, and fought stoutly against her foolishness. She could not have given any reason for such absurd moods, only that existence seemed to lack something. She knew that it was a sin to indulge in such vague fancies, and reminded herself what a pleasant, easy life she had led. Still the vague longings would return, and Nanny was glad to have her hours so completely filled up that she could not be sentimental or romantic.

"Of all animals," said Nanny, "I hate a sentimental old maid the worst."

September came, and the boys were contemplating the dire necessity of returning to pedagogues and penances, with the exception of Robert, who had graduated, and was to go away when his brothers left.

One morning Joe, the eldest of Mrs. Walters' sons, rushed into the breakfast-room full of wonderful news. The other boys always accused him of a weakness for gossip.

He kissed his two aunts; and the pleasant morning salutations were returned in kind, while Aunt Nanny laughed heartily, and Mrs. Howard tried her best to look stately and disapproving, but was forced to put by dignity, and laugh too, for a couple of the boys picked her up, chair and all, and carried her about the room in triumph, while a third improvised symphony out of a pair of silver dish-covers, and beat them unmercifully close to her ears.

When the victim's chair was at last set on the floor, and order, comparatively speaking, once more restored, Mrs. Howard said:

"You are the worst behaved creatures in the world, and you are just like Nanny."

"Lucky boys, to have such a Nanny!" shouted Robert; and then both ladies were hugged till they begged for mercy, and were as jostled and jumbled as if they had been playing with young boys.

"But I had some news," said Joe. "Nanny, Solmes' House is let. It has been taken by a family from Australia, and they are to come next week. The father is a cripple, the mother is paralytic; there's one girl has the rickets, another subject to fits, and there are three boys, one blind, one without any legs, and the other an idiot. How happy you will be; and, oh, won't you have your hands full among them?"

They all made merry at Nanny's expense; and she enjoyed the jest as much as the youngest cub of the whole lot.

"At last you will feel that you have come into full inheritance of your name, Nanny," said Mrs. Howard.

"Family of idiots," chorused the boys; and then they carried her about the room in the chair, and Joe walked behind, waving a great peacock-tail feather-duster over her head, and vowed that she was Pope Joan, of ancient but not respectable memory; and they all nearly laughed themselves into spasms.

Mrs. Walters appeared before they had recovered their composure, and the other boys struggled after. You could not keep the families apart for any great length of time. Mrs. Walters' account of the new proprietors of Solmes' House was rather more intelligible than Joe's had been.

The night before she had seen Johnson, a real estate agent of the neighbourhood, and it was true that a Scotch gentleman, who had lived in Australia, had taken the beautiful, neglected old place, and that he had an invalid wife and six children.

"Four of them girls," added Mrs. Walters.

"Heaven help him!" said Mrs. Howard.

"And the youngest, tiny babies—twins, and girls at that," continued Mrs. Walters.

"Heaven make him grateful," said Nanny.

Then Mrs. Howard told the story of Nanny's improper conversation just before the boys got home. And the boys laughed till they lay helpless, sprawled out on sofas and floor, and Nanny rushed from one to the other, and beat them unmercifully with a hearth-brush; and the two mothers laughed as heartily as ever they had done in their blithe, beautiful girlhood, a portion of whose sunshine, indeed,

seemed to have brightened their tired souls during the last few pleasant weeks.

"What is the man's name?" Mrs. Howard asked.

Neither Joe nor his mother had remembered to inquire.

"That is always the way with people crazy for news," said Robert, with grave maliciousness. "They are in such a hurry to repeat the gossip that they forget to ask just the thing that would be interesting to know."

The following day some of the servants said that the new family had arrived. Solmes' House was the next place to Undercliff—a great, ill-finished dwelling, which, when Nanny could first remember anything, had stood up bold and bare on the top of a rocky hill, but which nearly forty years, and the efforts of numerous different proprietors in succession, had now transformed into a very picturesque residence, with trees, and garden, and lawns, though it still bore its old name, and would, no matter how much any future tenant might still beautify it.

That evening Nanny and two of the boys met a handsome middle-aged man, walking with a brace of well-grown children, and a mistress of a little girl. The little girl had become disarranged as to some portion of her wearing apparel, and the father was clumsily trying to get her in order. Before she knew what she was doing, Nanny had rushed across the road, and had arranged the little's under-garments, and been brought back to consciousness and blushes by the earnest thumps of the parrot.

"You may kiss me, pink lady," said the child.

And Nanny did kiss her, and the father uttered proper excuses, and led his flock on. Nanny returned to the boys, who lay down on the bank, and kicked their heels in delight; but though she joined in their mirth, she was wondering all the while what gave the handsome man so good a look, and was beset by the idea that the three children, in spite of having a mother, were three very neglected, doleful little objects indeed.

Mrs. Walters and her sons dined at Undercliff that evening. On one pretence or another they did dine there at least five times each week.

Joe appeared—he was the unpunctual member of the tribe—after they were seated at table, and convulsed the group by giving the name of the new proprietor of Solmes' House.

"He must be Nanny's cousin," shouted Robert above the din. Then they rang the changes on George and Nanny till even the staid old man-servant, who was properly himself, retreated into a corner of the dining-room, and laughed behind a soup tureen-cover, till he was brought back to his senses by letting it fall with a horrible crash.

Late in the evening, after Mrs. Walters and her sons had departed, and the rest of the family, even to Jem, the youngest and most restless, had gone to bed, Nanny, sitting in her library, was roused by a ring at the outer-door. Old Jacob, who was making his nightly sound through the house, opened the door just as Nanny reached the hall. There stood Dr. Ferguson, and at sight of her he called:

"Miss Nanny, can't you come with me? The babies at Solmes' House are bad with cramp. The oldest girl has sprained her ankle, and the mother has got spasms. Come, for Heaven's sake! My trap is at the door. They sent for me to bring a nurse; there is none, so I stopped for you."

Nanny caught a shawl from the bed-rack, told Jacob to put out the lights, and close the house, and two minutes after she and the good old doctor were speeding away down the avenue as fast as the big brown mare, who knew the errand was important, could trot.

On the way the doctor explained that a frightened servant had brought the message to his office. The nurse had left that day on account of a quarrel with her mistress.

What a scene it was that met their eyes when they reached the house, and got upstairs! One baby shrieking wildly in the arms of a servant-girl, two young ones to know how to soothe it; the other baby gasping and moaning in its father's embrace; on a couch the older girl sobbing; two frightened boys huddled in a corner; from the distance the shrieks and wails of a woman's yew—that of the invalid mother, who could find nothing better to do in the midst of the general distress than to indulge in nervous spasms. Nanny seized the baby, smothering it with crump, from the father's arms. The doctor produced ipecacuanha. They got that down its throat. Servants were summoned from below, a fire kindled in the room, hot water brought, and every other sensible thing done.

By the time the doctor had arranged the wounded girl's ankle Nanny had the sick baby in a hot bath, and it was soon safe. Nanny had found time to send the other baby and the boys off to bed, under the charge of a red-faced Irish cook, who was ready



[JACK EVERHON'S DISMISSAL.]

to do anything, now there was anybody to tell her what to. Nanny bade the doctor go to the mother's room (her shrieks could still be heard), and pour the strongest dose of chloral down her throat that ever he administered to any human being.

When dawn broke, Nanny was still sitting by the fire, holding the baby on her knees, and the father and doctor sat opposite her; and I think she looked like an angel, in spite of her cheek bones, to the eyes of both.

The child was saved. Once, during the night, the horrible suffocation had returned. The doctor was at the end of his resources, but Nanny found means to bring it through.

"She has saved your child," the doctor said to Mr. Marsden, just as dawn appeared. Nanny thought, if she lived for ever, she could not forget the look in that father's eyes when he tried to thank her, and could not utter so much as a word.

For three days and nights Nanny never left the house, never had her clothes off, never lay down, except twice to snatch an hour's slumber on a sofa. For two days and nights the baby required constant care. After that, she had to go to the injured child and the mother; and when Nanny saw the mother she knew, what even the doctor did not believe, that the useless, inefficient life was at its close; it might be a matter yet of a few months, but not more.

Nurses were as scarce as Samaritans in that country neighbourhood. During the next fortnight Nanny lived more at Solmes' House than in her own home; and her sisters, by turns, aided her all they could in her task.

Before her duties ended the boys had gone away, and autumn showed signs of meaning to establish itself in the land.

Order reigned in the new household. The children worshipped Nanny, obeying her least look as they had never done anybody else's commands. George Marsden felt as if he must "have been entertaining an angel," though not unawares; and even

the silly, helpless, invalid wife felt, when Nanny entered the room, as if some good spirit had come to beguile her out of her weak, idle complainings.

Mrs. Marsden had been "playing ill," as children say, for years. She had done all she could, by indolence and sloth, utterly to break down a constitution never strong at the best, and she had succeeded. Now it was too late, she would have been glad to rouse herself, perhaps to make some use of the life she had so wasted, though even that desire she could only feel in a blind, sluggish fashion; but the power to do so was not granted.

Autumn lived out its brief gorgeousness, and paled into winter. When winter came, everybody knew that the mistress of Solmes' House could not live longer than to see another spring bud upon the earth—everybody but the sick woman herself. The doctor said she must not be told.

It was a busy winter to Nanny. Had the household been her own she could not have been fuller of cares. She lived half the season at the house; when she went home for a few days she took the children with her. The two sisters never ventured to expostulate. So far as little things went, they always tyrannized over Nanny in an affectionate way; but between Nanny and what she saw to be a duty they never presumed to interfere.

Spring brightened, and on a lovely March evening, warm and bright as May, Sophie lay dying, and her husband and Nanny watched beside her.

The past months had made Nanny perfectly familiar with their history. The invalid had talked more freely with her than she had ever done with any human being. More than that, Nanny's gentleness and patience had led the erring soul from darkness up to light. She knew that she was to die, and she hoped humbly that space would be given her in the next existence to repent and make amends for the errors of this.

"I want to tell you whole truth, George," the dying woman said, "because, at least, I must leave

you no room for grief, which you ought not to suffer.

He tried to check her, but she would speak, growing so agitated that Nanny, by a sign, warned him to let her continue. She rose herself to go away, but Sophie caught her hand.

"I want you to stay," she said. "I want you to hear."

"Then I will stay, dear," Nanny answered, and sat down again. Sophie clung to her hand still, and went on.

"He and I were engaged when we were children, Nanny, it was arranged between our families. When I was seventeen he went to Australia; he had property there. He was gone three years. I loved somebody else in the meantime. Wait, George!"

"I don't want to hear," he groaned.

"But I want you to hear," she said. "You have passed half your life making sacrifices for my sake—make just one more."

He did not expostulate further, and presently she continued:

"He jilted me, and just then you came back. You did not love me—I was silly, frivolous, weak—how could you! But my miserable vanity was stronger than my sense of honesty. I could not let the world know I had been duped! I knew you did not love me, but I held firm to the engagement—I married you. Forgive me now, George, also, maybe, Heaven cannot. George, George!"

She had risen on her pillow in sudden excitement. "I forgive you with all my heart and soul," he cried.

"There no one else to forgive me," she said, with a smile. She laid one hand on Nanny's arm, and pointed the other at him. "A good man," she said, "a good man. We went to Australia to live. You know, from what you saw when you first came to this house, what an awful life he must have had! I spared him nothing; but he never failed in his duty—never."

She died the next morning at daybreak, very peacefully. She had been sleeping. She roused herself suddenly, and said:

"Sing, Nanny."

And Nanny sang a beautiful hymn, as well as her tears would let her, which so often, during the winter, she had sung to please her friend.

Sophie lay quiet for a little, then called:

"George, George!"

He bent over her.

"Kiss me," she whispered. "Kiss the children for me. Go away now; I want to see Nanny."

He went, not thinking the end so close, and left the two together.

"Nanny," she said, "will you make my peace sure? will you do me a last favour?"

"Yes, dear; tell me what."

"If he should ever ask you—George, I mean—be a mother to my babies. Oh, say a prayer, Nanny, a prayer!"

Nanny brokenly uttered the first syllables. The dying woman repeated them. Nanny's voice died in a sob; when she looked up again Sophie lay back on the pillows, white and still, but the smile which beautified her face was an earnest of the peace to which she had gone forward.

Nanny kept the children for two months, and sent George away on a journey. Then he came back, gathered his children together, and departed to make himself a new home, leaving the two babes, because they knew Nanny now, and would not be parted from her.

Now and then he returned to visit his friend and his little ones, and Nanny was always cheerful and glad.

Two years went by, and then he came to Nanny with a question from his soul to hers.

"Can you care for me?" he asked. "I am forty-five years old, and you are the first woman I ever loved, Nanny. It is selfish on my part; it is asking you to take great care and trouble; but will you come? I am so lonely, in spite of the children, and I love you so dearly, Nanny! Do come!"

"I promised Sophie that I would, if ever you asked me," she said, smiling at him through her tears. "I'd rather bear trouble by your side than be made a queen, George."

So they were married. At first the sisters were horrified and indignant at the bare idea; but after George and Nanny opened their hearts to them, they could not be hard and unkind. As for the boys, they were wild with delight. They had grown to know "Uncle George" well, and considered the match a perfect one in all respects.

"Into the bargain," said Joe, "it is not even a change of name. Before she was Nanny, and now she is Nanny."

And from the day of her marriage to this, Nanny has never for an instant felt that Joe's words have failed in their fulfilment.

F. L. B.



[AT THE CLUB.]

OLD RUFFORD'S MONEY;
OR,
WON WITHOUT MERIT, LOST WITHOUT
DESERVING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The art of our necessities is strange
And can make vile things precious.

Shakespeare.

"WHOM does Time gallop withal?" asks Orlando, and the lively Rosalind merrily resolves his question: "With a thief to the gallows; for though he go never so softly, he thinks himself too soon there."

The pretty jest-maker, had she lived in modern days, might have instanced a man who has accepted a bill to meet a "temporary inconvenience," or who has indorsed one for a friend, or who has written his name across a stamp for "value received," in hopes to meet it, like Mr. Micawber, with "something that is sure to turn up." With such men doth Time indeed gallop withal.

Two days had elapsed, and on the third Reginald, in no enviable frame of mind, was seated at the identical table of the Regent Street café, reading the Paris "Constitutionnel" and awaiting the arrival of his moneyed friend. Half-past five and "he cometh not" as a fashionable novel saith on its title-page.

Reginald had not ordered dinner, he had, indeed, not even thought of that meal. One or two little contretemps, such as are apt to attend the impecunious and especially those who are living beyond their assured income and trusting to contingencies to pay unavoidable and certain outgoings, had occurred at the little cottage at St. John's Wood, a district in some parts of which the tradesmen's faith in their customers is not of a robust kind.

True, Peggy was not extravagant for one of her class—on the contrary she was so good-natured and ready-witted under the most embarrassing circumstances that Reginald felt doubly the inconvenience she so cheerfully encountered and pretty annoyances she always gallily passed aside.

That morning the fishmonger had, instead of executing a small order, handed his "trifling account," which had been discharged (and himself too from further calling) with the small balance of ready cash in hand at Camellia Cottage.

The consequences of this disbursement were comical and rather amusing to any one but those immediately concerned.

The blue-aproned purveyor, pocketing the money and the affront, drove merrily off with the fast little trotting pony with which he did his "round," and within half an hour he had, as he phrased it, "given the straight tip" to a milkman, a brewer, a green-grocer, two bakers, three butchers, four family grocers, and a "purveyor of cat's-meat" that "there was cash at Camellia Cottage, that he was squared up, and that those that were there first stood best chance."

The consequence of this practical bit of chaff was that, as in cases of greater boxes, there was a "run on the bank" of a most annoying and, to the victims, unaccountable character. The tradesmen, one and all, kept up an unintermitting peal on the "servants' bell," while some of them dragged out the "visitors' knob to an extent that soon overtaxed the power of its back spring.

The means of meeting the rush were soon exhausted, and Peggy, who treated the matter, after the first half-hour, as a capital joke, having twice personally assured applicants that "Mr. Percy Wyndham" was out, that the amount would be certainly sent round when he came in, coupled with the lady's extreme astonishment at the fellow's rudeness, as his master's money was quite safe, laughingly let out Reginald at the back garden door, which gave him exit by a narrow passage leading into another road, involving half a mile of circuit to any dun or undesirable visitor who might beset the front gate.

Peggy's hilarity was not, however, infectious.

Reginald Chesterton felt his brow burn and his mouth parched as he hurried along like a criminal eluding pursuit, or the "thief that doth fear each bush an officer." Shame and indignation overwhelmed him.

"Am I Reginald Chesterton?" asked he, bitterly, of himself, "who not many months since dreamt of forensic honours, of an alliance with the daughter of a proud baronet, of, perchance, a seat in Parliament? Nay, am I the Reginald Chesterton who, proud of my name and family, felt that the respectable position of the confidential employé of a great banking establishment was a descent from the lofty line of life I had marked out?"

Remorseful conscience answered him:

"Yes! the same man; but, oh, how changed in character, in soul, in honour!"

Reginald looked up. His name was certainly called out.

A dog-cart had just passed him, and the driver

was turning it sharply so soon as the pace permitted.

"Hullo! Chesterton!" cried the occupant of the box-seat, "where have you been hiding yourself? I've not seen you since that stupid Crenouire affair. But then I've been in Norway, among the fiords and the salmon, and back through Copenhagen, Denmark and the Duchies. I was going to make a call just about here, but I've made a mull of the address. Where are you going to-day?" The groom leaped down and took the horse's head. "There are some cross-country races at Finchley, at two or three this afternoon, and I'll give you a cast over if you like. Jackson's got a screw in one of them; I used to ride her in Leicestershire. Sold her two seasons ago because she said her prayers, sometimes on her head. Got fifty for her, and Jackey's bought her for two hundred and fifty under the hammer. Knew her in a moment. Don't tell him though; there is no use in hurting his feelings, and she can go not a little either, if she'll only keep on her legs, so I shall put it on her and chance it. Got up, old fellow; anything the matter—eh? Bob will ride behind."

The speaker was Albany Pierrepont, with whom the reader is already acquainted, and his careless, rattling style had given no opportunity for reply. Reginald felt indeed humiliated; his cheek burned with shame.

Fain would he have accepted the invitation, but as Benjamin Franklin observes in homely phrase, "It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright," and the proud Reginald Chesterton had scarcely a coin left after the recent drain on his depleted exchequer. He thought, too, of his appointment with Bowman and the immediate prospect of a remedy for the "aching void" in his cash-box.

"Very happy to make one at Finchley, Albany, but pressing engagements prevent. Twelve o'clock an appointment to meet the board (this was true). Five o'clock shall be at Regent Street to receive cash—must not neglect that appointment."

"Certainly not—you banker-fellows are always handing cash. By-the-by, Chesterton, I was thinking about having a talk with you about raising some of that indispensable commodity, when time and place snit. By-bye, if you won't get up—au revoir."

And the natty groom led the head of the horse and as the dog-cart turned sprang on the tailboard of the vehicle: away went the Honourable Albany Pierrepont in search of the address of some person whose name was certainly not to be found in the Directory, either Court or Commercial.

Reginald pursued his way to the bank, where his duties became daily more irksome. The manager no longer greeted him with a friendly smile, or inquired after his father and his sister with genial solicitude.

He met him or passed him with a formal bow, and spoke to him, so Reginald thought, with a constrained politeness, in marked contrast with the warm and hearty style of speech. The previous day there had been a full meeting of directors at the close of the annual audit, and on that occasion it was customary, after striking the balance and arranging for the second half-yearly dividend, to call in the manager, make him a present suitable to the business done, and thank him personally.

Then, in his presence, and generally on his suggestion, the board decided on such presents and promotions of the clerks and officers as their conduct and general merit might warrant.

For three successive years Mr. Gilbert had, on this day, with evident gratification, announced to "the son of his old friend," as he seemed proud to call Reginald, the commendation of the directors, a step in promotion and salary, and a handsome present towards defraying the expenses of his annual holiday, the time and duration of which Mr. Gilbert almost left to Reginald to decide.

Now, above all things Mr. Gilbert was a conscientious servant to his employers. He had been about when Reginald's name came under notice, as he had nothing to commend in his conduct; but there were some persons present who spoke of late hours, and others of laxity of behaviour, while one old gentleman of much weight in the directorate, producing his questions with some remarks on the pain he felt in putting them, asked Mr. Gilbert as to his knowledge of certain facts relating to Reginald Chesterton, of an injurious character, which Mr. Gilbert begged he might be excused from supplying to.

The name was passed by, and the subject dropped. Now, Mr. Gilbert, with the very best intentions, had chosen this very day to communicate these facts to Reginald, and to make them the test of what he felt to be an exemption to better behaviour in the future, a warning from an older as to the consequences of bad company, and lastly, a justification of his own change of manner in regard to a young man for whom he declared his sincere friendship and the great hopes he had entertained of his future career, now, he sadly feared, irreparably injured by his misdeeds. To this unpalatable bill of indictment Reginald Chesterton had thus day been called upon to plead.

He could not plead not guilty; so he remained silent; and, allowing judgment to go by default, received the implicit sentence "Go, and sin no more," which stung him like a lash of whips.

This little retrospect brings us abreast of the opening of this chapter, and we still find Reginald Chesterton mechanically reading the familiar of the *Paris Constitutionnel*, and striving in vain to distract his attention by a lively story of French life and manners by *Amend Gauthier*.

It is a few minutes to six, and his impatience is ceasing over, when a garçon appears with a note, which he hands to the head waiter, who looks inquiringly towards Reginald's table and advances.

"Mistake Chesterton?" asked the head waiter, who prided himself on what he called "spiking an English."

"It is for me."

The note was handed, and Reginald read as follows:

"MY DEAR SIR,

"An unexpected circumstance, entirely unavoidable, has prevented me from completing the little affair upon which we were to meet this day."

"The client upon whom I implicitly relied to cash the seventy-five pounds bill."—"The seventy-five pounds bill!" muttered Reginald. "He has two of them!"—has been called suddenly out of town, and will not return for some weeks.

"Pardon of business has interfered with my seeing the other party, but expect to do so to-morrow."

"Knowing the urgency of the matter with you, I have handed the seventy-five pounds, at three months, to Mr. Moss Solomon, whom I met at a consultation about a very important case, as I think I mentioned to you. He will do it for you. Call on him as soon as you can."

"With apologies for my breach of engagement, which shall be fully explained when we next meet,"

"Yours most faithfully,

"E. B."

"REGINALD CHESTERTON, Esq."

"(By hand.)"

The letter was written upon a quarto sheet, folded without an envelope, it was moreover sealed with an old-fashioned desk water stamp. There was neither date nor address, and of course no postmark.

Reginald was thunderstruck at what now seemed his own stupidity. There are and have been cleverer fellows than he, clever as he fancied himself, doped daily and in all times by the like shallow *keatsy*, as the annals of crime and credulity show.

He would have thought out the matter, so far as split milk can be gathered up by thinking, but he was suddenly brought back to the "ignorant present" and the full view of his remediless folly, by the waiter, who innocently interrupted his reverie with what he thought a question apropos of the letter he had just before delivered:

"Does mo'sien expect his friend to dine? or shall he wait?"

Now, "mo'sien" certainly did not expect his friend to dine, and as certainly he had himself little stomach for that repast. He felt sorely tempted to kick the smiling waiter who stood opposite to him, pertinaciously smiling, and again placing a disarranged fork straight, then flipping off an imaginary fly or grub with his napkin, lifting and turning the *serviette* counterpane with fussy, do-nothing diligence. But prudence whispered that kicking waiters might prove an expensive amusement, and would not clear being the cash or restore the pieces of paper he had so incautiously written upon to acknowledge receipt of "cash," as he had just received.

He accordingly, with the best grace he could assume, told *Moss Solomon* that he would not do so—at which *Moss Solomon* changed his shoulders, bowed, and said something like "a votre good pleasure," and immediately ordered a cup of coffee and a glass of cognac.

He then somewhat relieved himself by a sort of *whisper* prayer, in which Mr. *Solomon's* future state was very warmly provided for.

"Surely I was complete enough with the fellow whom *Moss Solomon* told me to go to. I should not be surprised if my fall came into our hands for presentation. What the fellow said I don't know. I could say how many without the cash I'd go and fetch it away directly and leave *Jackson's* IOU to the chapter of accidents. He don't want the money. Everything is arranged about a fellow when once his luck turns against him. *Jackson* was himself as much astonished at his run as I was. The amount was of no consequence to him—it was ruin to me, yes, absolute and irremediable ruin. Then, every year till now I've had, besides my advance of salary, a gratuity of fifty pounds to enjoy my holidays. This year no fifty-pound note, but a hundred pounds' worth of good advice, if a fellow were only in the position to take it. That fifty would have stopped a gap, but it's gone with the rest of my luck."

The black coffee came, with its thimbleful of *essence de vin*.

"Past six o'clock. Rather late for business. I wonder whether I should send that fellow to home? He lives in—*Street Strand*, though he gives his private address as *Brompton*, that I know. The prospect of news must wait till *St. James's Palace* has the reins in hand is about to receive another *disaster*."

The coffee was drunk, the brandy followed, and a cigar was lighted.

Reginald felt like the *enluprit* of olden *Tyburn*, who

Off adjusted the rope and traversed the cart, And often took leave, as though loth to depart.

Suddenly the thought of the sea anguished down and the state of siege of *Camellia Cottage* surged up, and he smiled bitterly, rose, buttoned his coat as though about to encounter bad weather, seized his hat before *Hippolyte* could hand it, and, throwing down a half-crown, dodged to *Hippolyte* that it was his, and was bowed out.

That night, at eight o'clock, Reginald Chesterton reached *Camellia Cottage* in a cab, on the seat of which, in a handkerchief, were several small canvas bags, which he had promised to return when emptied of their silver coin, amounting to fourteen pounds, fifteen shillings and ninepence—the last-named sum in threepenny bits—six five-pound Bank of England notes and one ten-pound ditto, a crossed provincial cheque for four pounds fifteen shillings, and an order for the delivery of ten pounds' worth of wine, to be placed to the account of Mr. *Moss Solomon*, by the United Continental Vineyard and Wine Growers' Association (Limited), of which Mr. *Moss Solomon*, who bore the business name of *Tyburn*, was secretary, treasurer and managing director.

This curious assortment of cash was "the best" Mr. *Moss Solomon* could possibly do to oblige his friend, Mr. Chesterton, "being taken, as he said, 'at a nonplush'; so after nearly an hour of chaffering and money-counting and running up and down stairs by Mr. *Solomon*—who had ten times the amount on the premises—Reginald Chesterton drove off with it, as an equivalent for his seventy-five pound bill, due that day three months, with one "day of grace" over.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE merry morning sun rose bright and cheerily over the lovely landscape; the dewdrops hung glittering on the graceful ferns; the broad expanses of the park, with its sweeping undulations, flecked here and there with the broad shadows of majestic oaks, elms, and chestnuts, beneath whose spreading boughs lay the antlered deer and their dappled does, with graceful fawns frisking by their sides, was carpeted with an emerald verdure; the newly-tended hay filled the air with the fragrance of sainfoin, as a young girl, fair as the scene she looked on, fresh as the morning she saluted, sweet as the odours she inhaled, stepped forth on the old-fashioned terrace of the old-fashioned grange at *Broadmoor*.

What age of gladness, when a flower,

A blossom, fruit, or tree,

Gives a new soul to each new hour:

That gladdens home with thee

When, like a living stream, life rolls along

In happy moments of unconscious song.

It was a glorious July morning, and *Amina Percival*, as she trooped down the broad fringes steps that led on to the lawn of the ancient pleasure might have suggested to a painter a figure like an *Adonis* well fitted to lead "the rosy-footed train."

She had indeed left the "hills of dawning light," and the smiling heat of what fashion would call "the gay and festive season," for purer delights and more solid pleasures than the crowded town can boast.

Her springy step and radiant face showed how happy was her innocent heart, and how her almost soul was in union with the glad sights and sounds around her. She felt that

All this animated nature

Is but organic forms divinely framed.

That tremble to the thought, and/or them

sway.

Divine, all-pervading, one intellectual

breath.

At once the soul of each and God of all.

And then the crowning consciousness of loving and being beloved by one to whom she looked up with maiden pride, one whom her experienced father and her kind-hearted brother approved, one whose praises were on every tongue, for, as we have already told the reader, the young naval hero, *William Sherlock* had wedded and won her; that her father had welcomed her declaration of her preference when the young officer had boldly asked her hand, and that now, happy in her choice, *Amina Percival* was going on a mission of mercy to a poor widowed cottager tenant, with a heart light and blithe as the carol of the lark that "as Heaven's gateways."

And how did she look back at her little episode of girlish love-making with Reginald Chesterton? With a slight blush of shame at her childish folly, and a sense of gratitude to that parent and those real friends who had saved her from the probably unhappy consequences of her error.

As for Reginald himself, she now felt that self-interest must have been his prompter, and had she at that moment met him it is doubtful whether contempt and dislike would not have been excited, so far as her gentle disposition permitted, at the sight of one whom she had ceased even to respect.

But though all this was known to the *Percivals*, the *Sherlocks*, and the *Chestertons*; the *Chesterleys*, *Macgregors*, *Halliwells*, at *St. James's Palace*, were not in their confidence. So there was a new surprise that morning for that excellent lady and the good gossip of the village; and once again the memorable *Laurel Walk* became the scene of an interesting adventure. We have already described how that lovely lounge led from the Park to the church and parsonage; how its length was commanded by the gable window of Mrs. Chesterley's abode, and how sedulously that excellent lady kept watch at noon, noon, and eve, when she engaged in gossiping visits, over the passengers by that famous trolleying path.

Two hours had passed and *Amina Percival* had discharged her mission of mercy. She had smoothed the pillow, and spoken words of kindness, and left some flowers and fruit and a dollop of old *Dobson* when the hour of nine sounded from the carillons of the old church.

The happy girl took her joyous way towards the vicarage, and turning the corner of the barbed hedge came full upon the view of Mrs. Chesterley, who sat sipping her morning tea unmoved in her "adipose of vintage."

"*Amina Percival*, as I'm alive and bound for the rectory. Hol' hol' there's not much consolation about that, for the young lieutenant came down only last night, they say; and the young lady has been here a month, so she has had plenty of opportunity

of seeing the door, which she certainly has not missed. I wonder what Reginald Chatterley would think of this modern style of the bay running after the house? And what his Robert, who exploded like one of those new-fangled bombshells when he heard of any young lady's pining for Mr. Chatterley, will say to a poor parson's son for a son-in-law? Well, that's his business. I should say that his daughter's something like him, of a tinkery nature and in great danger of any stray spark. Ho! ho!

The amiable lady's soliloquy was checked and her wondrousness increased, for there, standing over the stile from the churchyard, came young Sherlock himself, in a coat of navy-blue, with fawn trowsers of spotless white, and a gold-headed cane of maddest pattern.

His manly form showed well in his airy costume, his sun-brown hair curling in natural luxuriance around his temples, and his open countenance was radiant with a smile of joyful confidence as he advanced at a rapid pace to meet the proud baronet's daughter.

"Fare and away, indeed! I suppose this is modern manners. Why, Miss Chatterley, it's time you went to London, or to sea, for this matter, to learn the new style of beautiful maidens and timid husbands. Heyday! he's caught her by the hand, and she—yes, she—yes, he's kissed her, and, yes—he's kissed him in return, my eyes deceive me. I wish somebody was there to witness 'Reginald,' perhaps that would startle my young lady. Why Mrs. Grundest, the green-grocer's wife, was up at the Grange, and the housekeeper said that Miss Anna—yes, this very young lady—was crying and crying at being sent abroad and torn away from her dear only Reginald, as she called him. And they said she'd break his heart for him and die for love shut up in a convent cell among those foreigners. Alas, she looks like dying. Why, she's giving him a flower of some sort."

Mrs. Chatterley had brought her field-glass—she called it opera-glass—into requisition.

"It's a bunch of blue geraniums—ah, the regular forget-me-nots, out of bloom, I suppose. Very pretty indeed! and she takes his arm, and off they go like a couple of ready-paired turtle doves down to the parsonage. Lucky dog, that young Sherlock! 'Happy's the wedding that's not long a doing,' says the old song, and certainly this is the quickest affair that ever I saw in my life," continued Mrs. Chatterley, as young Sherlock gallantly headed Anna Percival up the step and over the stile she had just five minutes before stood as a bound.

Mrs. Chatterley saw no more, but downing her hand and basket she hurried down to Claupine Villa to communicate to the Macgregors the best intelligence.

But here good Mrs. Chatterley found her listeners, Claupine Villa was in a state of boisterousness and so were all its inmates.

Mrs. Macgregor had some wonderful news by the foreign mail.

A rich Pannoe merchant, "or something of the sort," of whom she knew little, had died, leaving something fabulous in the way of lakhs of rupees, diamonds, rubies, pearls, silk, embroidery, carved ivory, casement shawls, and such like oriental gear.

Now, Sir Cashmjee Rupjee Mow-yob had some years before been agent to the—Regiment, and received great favour and protection from Mrs. Colonel Macgregor's deceased husband. So, the grateful Hindu, having married an English, Irish or Scotch lady—no one else—sure which—that lady had desired on her death-bed that their Eurasian offspring, of which there were two, a girl and a boy, should be educated in England.

Hence the uproar at Claupine Villa. On the table in the reception-room, as the best parlour was called, lay ostentatiously upon a large square piece of yellow waxed canvas, in form like a monstrous envelope of a letter, the likeness being increased by an oblong piece of paper glued on its middle, on which, in a most legible roundhand, he who saw might read:

"For
"Mrs. Colonel Macgregor,
"Claupine Villa,
"Broadmoorshire,
"England,
"Europe."

This formidable packet was disfigured with all sorts of post-stamps and large figures in blue and red pencil or ink, and inscriptions of names of ships—"Bombay," "per India," "Overland Mail," "per Swiftness," "London," and the like, while by its side lay scattered with studied negligence a dozen pieces of pale coffee-coloured paper, covered closely with reed writing, and exhaling a strong odour of cedar and fumigation. This was the important sealed packet which, according to Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, was to change the whole fortunes of her

house, and which certainly did so, though not in the way she expected.

The letters set forth that part of the last will and testament of Sir Cashmjee Rupjee, wherein he commended his beloved children to the maternal care of the wife—now the widow—of the "most honourable, most distinguished and most valuable commander of the armies of Her Imperial Majesty of India, the Sahib Macgregor," and made arrangements for their passage to Europe, under care of their trusty ayah—nurse and foster-mother—suitable provision being made for her and their sustentation and for the children's education in England, the charges being defrayed by Messrs.—and Co., bankers, London and Bombay, out of a fund deposited in their hands for that purpose.

The letter from the London agents announced the almost immediate arrival of the P. and O. packet at Southampton, where she would be quite a few days, having on board the interesting little darkeys and their Russian attendant. The correspondent added that on their arrival at Southampton they would be met by an employe of the firm, who would accompany them to Broadmoor and deliver the precious charges safely to their future guardian, Mrs. Colonel Macgregor.

This was indeed an event, but there was more behind. A letter from one of Sir Cashmjee Rupjee's relations, a member of the firm, intimated that Mrs. Colonel Macgregor and her amiable daughters were legacies under the will of the deceased Indian millionaire, and that in due time Messrs.—and Co., of London, would communicate to Mrs. Macgregor the particulars of the legacy and the realized amount in sterling.

Here was indeed a prospect of the attainment of the one thing needful to culminate the greatness of the family name—solid wealth.

Poor Mrs. Macgregor's head was well nigh turned, and so far that matter were those of her three hitherto portionless daughters. Like mine Ancient Pistol they could talk of nothing but "lucky joys, and golden times and happy news of peace."

A fount for the world and worldling base, I speak of Africa and golden joys.

What chance then had Mrs. Chatterley's budget of news, in presence of their long supply? None. She "breathed her dead news in an dead ear," but in return she got such a second edition as well consoled her for the temporary mortification.

In two hours after her conversation with Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, Mrs. Chatterley had visited the Halliwell, the Hextalls, the post-office and library, and one or two other places of resort, and had impressed the story into something like the following:

That a great Indian prince, who owed his life to the late Colonel Macgregor, and who was worth millions of money, had left his only son and daughter to the care of Mrs. Colonel Macgregor, with a nurse, and bags full of diamonds and pearls, together with a large sum of money, some thousands; she understood, to each of the Miss Macgregors. That the children would be here directly, and were to be put to school till a proper age, and then go back to India, and the son would succeed to his father's throne—lastly, she so understood it. But at any rate the fortune of the Macgregors was made.

On which one or two of the small traders among her auditory observed:

"That they were glad to hear it, as Mrs. Colonel Macgregor was terrible alone, and what was worse, a real long-minded in running up accounts."

Other results of this reported improvement in the fortunes of the Macgregors must be reserved for the next chapter.

To be continued.

An impossibility—Perfect confidence seldom exists between man and wife. There are many things that cloud a man's brow and sour his temper about which he cannot take his wife into his confidence. She would not probably understand them if he did, and the attempt to translate these troubles into definite speech is to many a man a more acute pain than to simply endure them. Women may have noticed the fact that the boiling kettle continues to bubble a little after it has been lifted from the fire. In the same way the active brain of the hard-worked business man will, in spite of himself, run on the affairs of his office after he has come within the precincts of his home.

True Hospitality.—The perfect host should strive to make his guests become friends, if they are not so at present, so that they might, in future days, trace back the beginning of their friendship to their having met together at his house. He, the perfect host, must have the art to lead conversation without absorbing it himself, so that he may develop the

best qualities of his guests. His expense in entertainment should not be devoted to what is luxurious, but to what is comfortable and amusing. The first of all things is that he should be an affectionate, indeed a loving host, so that every one of the guests should feel that he is really welcome. He should press them to stay but should be careful that this pressing does not interfere with their convenience, so that they stay merely to oblige him, and not to please themselves.

ONLY A STIMULANT.

A RESPECTABLE gentleman at Edinburgh related a few years ago a most affecting incident. A religious lady at Edinburgh was sent to visit a woman who was dying in consequence of disease brought on by habits of intemperance. The woman had formerly been in the habit of washing in this lady's family, and when she came to the dying woman she remonstrated with her on the folly and wickedness of her conduct, in giving way to so deadly a sin as intemperance. The dying woman said:

"You have been the author of my intemperance."

"What did you say?" exclaimed the lady, with pious horror. "I the author of your intemperance?"

"Yes, ma'am; I never drank whisky until I came to wash in your family. You gave me some, saying it would do me good. I felt intoxicated, and you gave me some more. When I was at other houses, not so hospitable as yours, I purchased a little, and by-and-by I found my way to the dram-shop, thinking a little stimulant was necessary to carry me through my hard work. And so by degrees I became what you now see me."

Conceive what this lady felt. A. B. M.

VALUE OF TIME.

The most profound mathematician could not estimate the amount of valuable time that is continually being wasted, and that, too, in the most wanton manner, by both the young and the old.

It is only at too late an hour that these spendthrifts of time begin to see the folly of which they have been guilty in foolishly wasting so much of their valuable time.

Physicians have ascertained and determined just the number of hours necessary for the useful refreshment of mind and body, and for the healthy continuance of this life; yet how many hard or are governed by this allotment of time for sleep? Too much time by far is spent in sleep. A young man, if he goes to school or business, will rise only at such an hour as will allow him sufficient time to prepare his toilet, eat his breakfast, and reach in time his school or place of business; and here I may add, this wanton habit is not confined to young men only; young ladies, men and women, all are guilty of manfully wasting their time.

To sleep one or two hours longer than is necessary deducts just so much from the refreshment we otherwise would derive to our mind and body; for we are benefited only by just the requisite quantity of sleep; no more. All in excess of that quantity does the recipient no good whatsoever—on the contrary, is productive of injury; for it weakens the body and stupifies the mind. But when we take that only which nature demands the body is invigorated, and all its powers are renewed or renovated.

Let those persons who are guilty of sleeping late in the morning, and those who when arisen only idle away their time, try, just for an experiment, and see how much can be accomplished in a day in which not an hour, nor the fractional part of an hour, has been wasted. Besides, this habit of industry will in time become a part, so to speak, of their second nature; and the interest accruing therefrom will not come amiss, financially nor intellectually.

H. J. G.

STRONG-MINDED FEMALES.—Only female spiders spin webs. They own all the real estate, and the males have to live a vagabond life under stones and in other obscure hiding places. If they come about the house so often as to bore the ruling sex they are mercilessly killed and eaten. The spider's skin is as unyielding as the shells of lobsters and crabs, and is shed from time to time in the same way, to accommodate the animal's growth. If you poke over the rubbish in a female spider's back yard, among her cast-off cocoons you will find the jackets of the males who have paid for their sociability with their lives— trophies of her barbarism as truly as scalps show the savage nature of the red man.

MONOGRAM DRESSES.—The latest whimicality in ladies' dress is to have the wearers' monograms embroidered upon them. The Princess of Wales has inaugurated this strange style on an Edinburgh cloth

dress by having her monogram surrounded by a garland of flowers, and crossed with the crown, with three plumes; the same work was bestowed upon the waist. The initials are not only embroidered with endless arabesques, but have also the principal elements of the wearers' crests mingled with many-coloured designs, as in mediæval missals. This is an absurd fashion, and it is to be hoped that the fair sex will adhere to floral ornaments for their toilets.

TOM AND I.

I HAD crossed in the bright October sunshine from Calais to Dover without once taking refuge in the close, pent-up saloon below, which is sometimes a little purgatory when the waters of the Channel are stirred to their depths, and the boat is tossed like a feather from one angry wave to another. It was very quiet that day, and the sea was literally like glass, with the sunshine falling so softly upon it. Nobody had been sick except a fair young girl, with blonde unmistakably stamped upon her, from her dainty travelling-dress of gray to the trustful glance of the blue eyes lifted so often and lovingly to the face of the young man beside her. Once, when the boat rocked more than usual, she had turned white to her lips, and, dropping her golden head upon the shoulder of her husband, had kept it there in a weary, languid kind of way, while I speculated about her, wondering who she was, and where she was going, and hoping that the party of loud-talking girls, who seemed to monopolise and fill the entire deck, would take note of her, too, and see that at least one of my countrywomen had taste, and style, and beauty combined.

But this little bride, with the blue eyes and golden hair, might have come from the showrooms of the most fashionable modiste and not have shamed her mantua-maker. She had evidently been got up in Paris, and I watched her with a good deal of interest until the cliffs of Dover were in sight, and we were nearing the shores of England and home. Then, in seeing to my boxes, which were the very last to be brought from the boat, I forgot everything, and came near being left myself by the train waiting to take us to London.

"Quick, miss, you've only quarter of a second," a porter cried, as, in my bewilderment, I was looking for a carriage. "Here, herel this way! Second class!" he screamed again, interrogatively, and seizing the door of a second-class carriage he held it open for me, guessing, by what intuition I know not, that I must necessarily be a second-class passenger.

For once he was mistaken, for, thanks to the kindness of dear Kitty Bute, with whom my vacation had been passed, I was first-class all the way from Paris to London, and, rejecting contemptuously the porter's offer of assistance, I sprang into the nearest first-class compartment just as the train began to move, and found myself alone with the little bride and groom.

There was a look of annoyance in the blue eyes of the bride, while the young man gave a significant pull to his brown moustache, and I knew I was not wanted.

But I had a right as valid as their own, and, taking my seat on the opposite side near the open window, I pretended to be occupied with the country through which we were passing so swiftly, while my thoughts went back to the past, gathering up the broken threads of my life, and dwelling upon what I had been once and what I was now.

And this is the picture I saw far back through a vista of twelve long, weary years: A pleasant old house in Middlesex—an English house, of stone, with ivy creeping over it even to the chimney-tops, and the boxes of flowers in the windows, the tall trees in front, the patches of geraniums and petunias in the grass, the honeysuckle over the door of the wide, old-fashioned hall, through which the summer air blew softly, laden with the perfume of roses and heliotrope, and the sweet-scented mignonette. And I was standing in the door, with a half-opened rose in my hair, and the tall, angular boy who had placed it there was looking down upon me with great tears swimming in his eyes, as he said, sorry-like and low:

"Keep the rose, Norah, till I come back, and I shall know you have not forgotten me, even if you are Mrs. Archibald Browning."

There was an emphasis on the last name, and a tone in his voice as he spoke it, which did not please me, and I said:

"Oh, Tom, why can't you like Archie better, and he so noble and good and so kind to get you that position with his uncle in India?"

"Yes, I know. Archie is lovely, and I am a brute because I don't feel like kissing his feet just because

he interested himself to get me the place. But I hope you will be happy, and if those two lubbers of cousins happen to die, you will be my Lady Cleaver, and mistress of Brierton Lodge; but don't forget old Tom, who by that time will be married to some black East Indian princess, and have a lot of little darkies running round. There, I must go now; it's time. I say, Norah, come with me through the field to the highway. I somehow want to keep hold of you to the very last, and Archie won't care. I'm your brother, you know."

Yes, he was my brother to all intents and purposes, though only my second cousin. But I had no brother, or sister, or mother, only a father and aunt, and Tom had lived with us since I was a little girl of ten, and now he was going out to India to make his fortune. His ship would sail on the morrow, and I could not refuse to go with him as far as the highway, where he was to take the stage for London.

It was a forlorn, dreary walk through the pleasant grassy lane, for I loved Tom very dearly, and there was a great wrench in my heart at the thought of parting with him. He was silent, and never spoke a word until the stile was reached, where we were to part. Then, suddenly lifting me high in his arms, as if I were a child, for I was very short and he was very tall, he kissed my forehead and lips, and cried like a baby, as he said:

"Good-bye, little Norah, Mrs. Archibald Browning, good-bye, and God bless you; and if that husband ever does abuse you, tell him he will answer for it to me, Tom Gordon, the gawky cousin with more legs than brains."

"Oh, Tom," I said, struggling down to my feet, "you know Archie did not mean that, and maybe he never said it. I wish you did not hate him so."

"I don't hate him, Norah. I simply do not like him, or any of his race. They are a proud set, who think you highly honoured to be admitted into the highbred family of Brownings. And then, too, Norah," he continued, with that peculiar smile which was his one beauty and made him irresistible, "then, too, Norah, you see—you know—I'm not your brother; I'm only your second cousin, and though I never thought you very handsome, you are the nicest girl I ever knew, and—well, I think I meant to marry you myself!"

He burst into a merry laugh and looked straight in my face as I drew back from him with a gasp, exclaiming:

"You, Tom; you marry me! Why, I'm old enough to be your grandmother!"

"You are twenty, I am nineteen, that's all the difference, though! Confess that you have badgered, and scolded, and lectured me enough for forty grandmothers," he said; "but there's the stage, and now it's really good-bye."

Two minutes more and I was walking back alone through the quiet shady lane, where Tom and I had played together so often, and where now were the remains of a playhouse he had built under a spreading oak. There was his room, divided from mine by a line of stones, and there in the wall the little niche where I kept my dishes and hid the gooseberry tarts away from greedy Tom. How happy we had been together, making believe sometimes that I was his mother and he my sick baby, which I tried to look to sleep in my lap, finding his long legs a great inconvenience and a serious obstacle to waltz-posting on my part.

Again, he was a fierce knight and I a lorn maiden shut up in some grim fortress, usually old Danlos Castle, for we had once visited the north of Ireland and explored the ruins of what some writer terms "The grandest, romanticest, awfulest sea-king's home in all the broad kingdom." We had had our quarrels, too, and even fights, in which I always came off victor, owing to my peculiar mode of warfare, as I had a habit of springing upon him like a little cat and tearing his face with my nails, while he was usually content with jerky pulls at my hair.

But all that was over now and buried with the doll whose head he had broken because I would not stay home and nurse him when he had the quinsy, and could only talk in a wheezy kind of way. He had threatened revenge, and taken it upon my prettiest Paris doll, and I had flown at him like a tiger and scratched his nose till it bled, and cried myself sick, and then we had made it up and buried doll near the old playhouse in the lane, and reared a slab to her memory, and planted some daisies on her grave.

And just here, near what seemed to be the grave of my childhood, I sat down that summer afternoon and thought of all those years—of Tom on his way to India, and of the future opening so brightly before me, for I was the betrothed wife of Archibald Browning, who belonged to one of the best families in the county, and in less than a month we were to be married and spend our honeymoon in Switzerland,

among the glorious Alps of which I had dreamed so much.

I knew that Archie's mother was very proud, and thought her son might have looked higher than Norah Burton, especially as there was a possible peerage in prospect, but she was civil to me, and had said that a season in London would improve me greatly, if such a little creature could be improved, and Archie, I was sure, loved me dearly notwithstanding that he sometimes criticised my style and manner, and wished I was more like his cousin, Lady Darinda Cleaver, who, I heard, powdered her face and pencilled her eyebrows, and was the finest rider on Rotten Row.

Tom, who had been often in London, had seen the Lady Darinda and reported her as a perfect giantess, who wore a man's hat, with a flapper behind on the waist of her riding-suit, and sat her horse as stiffly and straight as if held in her place by a ramrod, and never rode faster than a black ant could trot.

This was Tom's criticism, which I had repeated to Archie, who laughed a little, and pulled his light-brown moustache, and said: "Tom was not a proper judge of stylish women, and that Darinda's manners were faultless."

I had no doubt they were, though I had never seen her, but I should ere long, as she had consented to be one of my bridesmaids, and had written me a note which was very prettily worded, and very patronizing in its tone, and made me dislike her thoroughly.

She was in London now, Archie had written in the letter in which he told me he should be with me on the day after Tom's departure. I was never so glad for his coming, I think, for my heart was very heavy at parting with Tom, whose words, "I meant to marry you myself," kept ringing in my ears as I sat alone in the grassy lane by the ruins of the playhouse he had built. Not that I attached the slightest importance to them, or believed for a moment that he was serious in what he said, for he was my brother, my dear, good brother, who had been so much to me, and whom I missed so much that at last I laid my head upon dolly's miniature grave and cried bitterly for the boy travelling so fast to London and the ship which would take him away. There was, however, comfort in the thought that Archie was coming on the morrow, and the next morning found me with spirits restored, eager and expectant for my love. But Archie did not come, and the hours wore on and there was no news of him until the following day, when there came a note from his mother telling me he was ill.

"Nothing very serious," she wrote, "only a heavy cold, the result of a drenching he received while riding with Darinda several miles out in the country. He sends his love and says you are not to be alarmed for he will soon be with you."

That was the note, and I was not to be alarmed—nor was I. I was only conscious that a strange kind of feeling took possession of me, which I could not define, but which sent me to my room where the bridal array lay, and made me fold it up, piece by piece, and put it carefully away with a consciousness that it would never be worn. Not was it. There was much illness in our neighbourhood that summer, and the morning after hearing of Archie's illness I took my breakfast in bed, and after that day knew little of what was passing around me until the roses, which were blossoming so brightly when Tom went away, were fading on their stalks, and other and later flowers were blossoming in their place.

I had been ill, Aunt Esther said, with the distemper, as they called the disease which had decimated so many homes in our vicinity.

"What day is it? What day of the month, I mean?" I asked, feeling dazed and bewildered and uncertain whether it was yesterday that I sat in the lane and cried for dear Tom or whether it was long ago.

"It's the tenth," she said.

And her voice shook a little, and she did not turn her face toward me, but pretended to be busy with the curtains of the bed.

"The tenth?" I cried. "Tenth of July, my wedding-day. Do you mean that?"

"Yes," she answered, softly, "it was to have been your wedding-day."

"And Archie," I continued. "Is he better—is he here?"

Still her face was turned from mine and her hands were busy with the curtain as she replied:

"He is not here now, but he is better, much better."

This time her voice and manner awoke in me a suspicion of some impending evil, and, exerting all my strength, I raised myself in bed and said, vehemently:

"Aunt Esther, you are keeping something from me. Tell me the worst at once. Is Archie dead, or Tom, or both?"

"No, no. Oh, no, not Tom. Heaven forbid that Tom should die. There's a letter for you from him. I'll get it, shall I? You were not to read it till to-day."

She started to leave the room, but I kept her back with my persistent questioning.

"You have not told me all; you are trying to deceive me. Is Archie dead?"

Archie was dead and buried ten days ago. The heavy cold taken while riding with Lady Darinda had become congestion of the lungs, and while I lay unconscious of my loss he had died, and Lady Darinda had written me a note of condolence and sympathy.

Mrs. Browning was too much broken down to write, she said, and so on her devoted the painful duty of telling me how quietly and peacefully Archie had died after an illness of a few days.

"I nursed him myself to the very last and was the more anxious to do it," she wrote, "because I fancied he had never quite forgiven me for having refused him, as you probably know I did two or three years ago, just before he met you. I was very fond of Archie, poor fellow, even if I could not marry him, and it nearly broke my heart to see him die. He spoke your name once or twice, but I could not make out exactly what he said, except 'Be kind to her,' and Mrs. Browning wishes me to assure you of her friendship and good feeling and desire to serve you if ever in her power to do so. We did not tell Archie you were ill; we thought it better not, and as he expressed no wish to have you come to him it was not necessary. I send a lock of his hair, which I cut for you myself, and Mrs. Browning says she thinks the picture you have of him better than any she has ever seen, and she will be very glad if you will lend it to her until she can have some copies of it taken. Please send it at once, as we shall leave London soon for Bath, my aunt's health rendering change of air and scene imperative."

"Yours, in sorrow and sympathy,"

"DARINDA DUNN."

As I read this strange epistle I felt as if turning into stone, and had my life depended upon it could not have shed a tear for the lover dead and the ruin of all my hopes. Indeed, in looking back upon the past, I do not think I ever really cried for Archie; though for weeks and months there was a heavy pain in my heart, a sense of loss and loneliness and disappointment, but often as I felt the hot tears start there came the recollection that I had not been his first choice, if indeed I were ever his choice at all, that it was probably in a fit of pique he had asked me to be his wife, and this forced the tears down and made me harder, stouter than before. I sent his picture back that very day, and with it my engagement ring, a splendid solitaire, which I reflected with bitterness would some day sparkle on Lady Darinda's finger, and it did. I did not write a word. I could not. I merely sent the ring and the picture, and felt when I gave them to Aunt Esther that my old life was ended and a new one just begun.

"Tom's letter you have not read yet. It may comfort you. I'll bring it directly," Aunt Esther said, and in a moment I had it in my hand, and was studying the superscription:

"Miss Nora's Brother, The Oaks, Middlesex."

"Not to be opened till the wedding day."

Then for a moment there was a feeling in my throat as if my heart were "rising into" my mouth but I forced it down, and breaking the seal, read the letter, which was so much like Tom. He had been out to sea three days, and there was a ship in sight by which they hoped to send messages home, so he was trying to write in spite of the fearful condition of his stomach, which he described as a kind of raging whirlpool.

"Dear Norah," he began, "I am sitting on deck on a coil of rope, and am more sick than a horse. I've thrown up everything I ate for a month before I left England, and everything I expect to eat for a month to come, but I must write a few lines of congratulation to Mrs. Archibald Browning, as you will be when you read this letter. Norah, I hope you will be happy; I do, upon my word, even if I did talk against him and say I meant to marry you myself. That was all bosh, for of course a venerable kind of a girl like you never could think of such a spindle-shanked, sandy-haired gawky as I am. Archie is far better for you and I am glad you are his wife, very glad, Norah, and no sham, though last night, when I sat on the deck and looked out over the dark sea toward old England and you, there was a lump in my throat as big as a tub, and six-footer as I am. I laid my head on the railing and cried like a baby and whispered to myself, 'Good-by, Norah, good-by, once for all.' I was bending up double the next minute, and that cramp finished the business, and knocked all sentiment out of me, so to-day you are

my sister, or mother, or grandmother, just which you choose to call yourself, and I am very glad you are to marry Archie. I mean to be a rich man, and by-and-bye pick up some English girl in India, and bring home to you. There it comes again! that horrid creep from the toes. I can't stand it. Good-by! Yours in the last agony."

Tom Gordon.

I had been out in a yacht on the Irish coast and been sea-sick, and I knew just how Tom felt and could imagine how he acted, and I laughed aloud in spite of Archie dead and the great pain at my heart. In fact the laugh did me good, and with Tom's letter under my pillow I felt better than before I read it.

It was four months before we heard from him again, and then he was so sorry for me, so kindly sympathetic, that I cried as I had not cried since Archie died. Tom was well and happy, and liked the country and his employment and, to use his words, was having a "gay old time" with some "jarvis of chaps" whose acquaintance he had made. Regularly each month we heard from him for a year or more, and then his letters became very irregular, and were marked with a daring and flippancy I did not like at all. Then followed an interval of silence, and we heard from other sources that Tom Gordon, though still keeping his place and performing his duties to his employer faithfully, was growing fast into a reckless, daring dissipated man, such as no sister would like her brother to be.

I was his sister; he was my brother, I said, and I wrote him a letter of remonstrance and reproof, telling him how disappointed I was in him, and begging him to reform for my sake, and the sake of the old time when we were children together, and he had some respect for goodness and purity. He did not answer that letter. I think it made him angry, and so I could only weep over the wayward boy, and pray earnestly that Heaven would save him yet, and restore him to us as he used to be before he strayed so far from the paths of rectitude.

And so the years went by till I was twenty-five, when, suddenly, without a note of warning, my father died, and by some turn in the wheel of fortune, never clear to my woman's vision, Aunt Esther and I were left with a mere pittance not sufficient to supply the necessities even of one of us. Then Tom wrote and offered to come home if I wished it, but I did not. I was a little afraid of him, and something in my reply must have shown him my distrust, for he was evidently hurt and piqued, and did not write again until after Aunt Esther and myself were settled in lodgings in London, and taking care of ourselves. For we came to that at last; came to the back room, upper floor, of a lodging-house in pleasant old Kensington, with the little hall bedroom, scarcely larger than a recess, for our sleeping apartment, and only my piano left me as a reminder of the dear old home in Middlesex, where strangers now are living. And I was a teacher of French and music, and went out every day to give lessons to my pupils, who lived, some of them, near to Abingdon Road, and some of them farther away.

With the next seven years this story has little to do. Aunt Esther died within the first two years, and I was left alone, but stayed always with the Misses Keith, the three dear old ladies who kept the house and petted me like a child. They were poor themselves, and depended for their living upon what their lodgers paid them, and I was the least profitable to them of all, for my little back room on the upper floor was the cheapest room they had. Still I think they would have parted with me more unwillingly than with the rich widow and her son who occupied the drawing-room floor, and made them handsome presents every Christmas. I kept their old hearts young, they said, with my music and my songs, and they pitied me so much, knowing what I used to be and what I am now.

From Tom I heard quite often after Aunt Esther died. He was a better man, rescued from depths of dissipation he knew not how, he wrote, unless it was the memory of the old time in Middlesex, and the prayers he was always sure I made for him. It was strange that through all his wilderness he had been retained and trusted by his employer, who depended greatly upon him, and made him at last his confidential clerk. That was the turning-point, and from that time he went up and up until few young men, it was said, stood higher or were more popular in Calcutta than my Cousin Tom. And I was so proud of him; and when I read his letters telling me of his success and the many people whom he knew, and the families where he visited—families whose friends lived in London—I was glad he did not know just how poor I was, and that if even one scholar failed me I must deny myself something in order to meet the necessities of my life. I had never written him the truth with regard to my circum-

stances. I told him of the Misses Keith who were so kind to me, and of my cozy room which looked into a pleasant garden, and upon the rear of the church which the Duke of Argyll occasionally honoured with his presence. I had also mentioned, incidentally, that as I had plenty of leisure, I gave a few lessons in music to the daughters of gentlemen who lived in the vicinity of Abingdon Road. For this deception my conscience had smitten me cruelly, and if asked for a motive, I could not have given one. I merely wished to keep my poverty a secret from Tom, and up to the time when I was a passenger in a first-class carriage from Dover to London I had succeeded in doing so, and though Tom frequently sent me some token of remembrance from India, and among other things, a real Cashmere shawl, which I could not wear because of the contrast between that and my ordinary dress, he had never sent me money, and my pride was spared at the expense of a deception on my part.

I had been on a little trip to Paris and Switzerland with one of my pupils, who defrayed all my expenses, and to whom I was indebted for the freest, happiest weeks I had known since my father's death. But these had come to an end. I had said good-bye to the glorious Alps, good-bye to delightful Paris, good-bye to my pupil, who was to remain abroad with her mother, and here I was at the last stage of my journey, nearing London, whose smoke and spires were visible in the distance. As we flew along like lightning toward the city there came over me a great dread of taking to the old monotonous life again—a shrinking from the little back room, third floor, which was dingy and dreary with the dark paper on the walls, the threadbare carpet, and the paint which had seen so many years. There was a loathing, too, of my daily fare, always the cheapest I could find—the mutton chop, with rolls and eggs, and the invariable tea. No more French dishes, and soups, and café au lait for me. I was not the guest of a party now; I was against the poor music-teacher, going back to my bondage, and for a few moments I rebelled against it with all my strength, and hot, bitter tears forced themselves to my eyes and rolled down my cheeks. Hastily dashing them away, I glanced at the couple opposite the bride and bridegroom, to see if they were noticing me; but they were not; they were wholly absorbed in themselves, and were talking of Paris and the fine people they had met there, while the bride was wondering if Miss Lucy Elliston, who lived in Grosvenor Square, would really call upon her as she had promised to do. The name, Elliston, was not new to me, for Tom had more than once mentioned a friend of his, Charlie Elliston, whose father lived in Grosvenor Square, but I did not know there was a Lucy, and I became interested at once when I heard the bride say:

"George, do you remember how long it is since Miss Elliston returned from India?"

George did not know, and the bride, whom George called Addie, continued:

"How very stylish she is, and how much she talked of Mr. Gordon. Is it one of the Gordons, do you suppose?"

George did not know, and the conversation soon changed to another subject, while I began to wonder if it could be Tom of whom Miss Lucy Elliston talked so much. Tom was in India, and Tom was descended directly from the Gordons, whose coat of arms could be seen any day in Hyde Park during the season. Did Tom know Miss Lucy Elliston, and was she so very stylish and proud, and had not he in one of his letters mentioned the number of the house in Grosvenor Square? If so, I would walk round, some day and look at it, I said, just as we shot under cover at Victoria Station, and my journey was at an end.

It seemed as if my one insignificant little box was always destined to be the last found, and it was a long time before I took my seat in the cab and was driven in the direction of Abingdon Road. The October sun, which all the day had poured such a flood of golden light upon the English landscape, had gone down in a bank of clouds, and I remember that there were signs of rain in the chill evening air, and the fog began to creep up around the lamp-posts and the corners of the streets as I rode through the darkness with a feeling of home-sickness at my heart as I remembered the Alps and Paris, the long vacation free from care, with every want supplied, and then thought of the little back room, third floor, with its dingy furniture. Even the warm welcome I was sure to receive from the Misses Keith was forgotten in the gloom which weighed upon my spirits, when at last the cab stopped before No. —, which was all ablaze with light, candles, in the basement, candles in the dining-room and gas, it would seem, in the drawing-room floor, which the wealthy widow had left before I went away, but which evidently had another occupant now. My ring was answered by

the youngest Miss Keith, who I fancied looked a very little disappointed at sight of me and my box. "You here?" she said; "we didn't expect you till to-morrow night. But you are very welcome, but you see—come this way, please, down stairs. Don't go to your room now. It's cold there and dark. We have let the drawing-room floor very advantageously for a newly married couple, who have just arrived. She is so pretty."

By this time we had reached the little room in the basement where the Misses Keith took their meals and sat when the business of the day was over, and where now a cheerful fire was blazing, making me feel more comfortable than I had since I left the Victoria station in the cab. The elder Miss Keith and her sisters were glad to see me, but I thought they looked anxious at each other as if I were not after all quite welcome. In a fervent, miserable state of mind I sat down to wait my cold feet by the fire, wondering if letting the drawing-room floor so advantageously had quite put poor me in the background.

Evidently it had, for after a few questions as to my journey, I was left alone, while the three ladies fitted back and forth, up stairs and down, actively busy with the grand dinner to be served in the drawing-room for the survivors, Mr. and Mrs. Trevillian, who were reported as making elaborate toilets for the occasion.

"Married just six weeks, and her dress is beautiful," Miss Keith said to me, as she conducted me at last to my room, which she reported as ready for me.

The drawing-room door was open, and as I passed in I could not forbear glancing in at the sofa, set with the best damask, and silver, and glass which Mr. —afforded, and right before the fire, under the chandelier, stood the bride in full evening dress of light silk, her golden curls falling behind from a pearl comb, and her blue eyes upturned to the husband who stood beside her, so George, as I knew in a moment, recognising them at once as my fellow-travellers from Dover, and remembering again what the bride had said of Miss Lucy Blinton and a Mr. Gordon. Straightly enough, too, my thoughts went far back to Archie and what I might have been had he lived, and there was a swelling of my heart, and the tears were in my eyes as I followed Miss Keith to my room, the door of which she threw wide open, and then stood back for me to see and admire.

"Oh—! what have you done?" I exclaimed, and then in a instant I comprehended the whole, and knew just how the good souls had planned, and contrived, and undoubtedly devoted themselves to give me this surprise and delightful welcome home.

It was not the old dingy apartment at all, but three cheerful rooms, with fresh paint and paper, a new, light ingrain carpet of drab and blue, with choice coverings for the furniture of the same shade, and pretty muslin curtains looped back from the windows in place of the coarse Nottingham lace which had always been an offence to me. And to this a bright fire in the grate, and my little tea-table drawn up before it with the rolls and chop, and pot of dunsop plums, and the tea-bottle boiling merrily, and you have the picture of the room which I stood contemplating, while Miss Keith blew her nose softly, and wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron as she said:

"You see, the girls and I (they always spoke of each other as girls, these women of fifty, fifty-five and sixty) the girls and I thought you had been forlorn long enough, and when Mrs. Winters left and was pleased to give us ten pounds extra, and we let the drawing-room so quick and well, pay beginning the day it was let, we said we could do something for Miss North, and we meant to have the fire made and a nice hot supper ready when you came, but you took us by surprise, and we had to keep you below till we could straighten up. I am glad you like it. There's Mrs. Trevillian's hall and I must go."

She left me then and went to the little bride, who I knew did not enjoy her elaborately served dinner in her handsome parlour one-half as much as I enjoyed my simple tea in my chair before the fire, which whispered and spit so cheerily and cast such pleasant shadows on the wall. All my poverty and loneliness were for the time forgotten in the gladness of these creature comforts, but they returned to a certain extent when, my supper over and the washings removed, I sat down to read the few letters which had come for me within the last few weeks and had not been forwarded. Was there one from Tom? I asked myself, and I was conscious of a feeling of disappointment when I found there was not.

"Tom does not care for me any more," I said, sadly, to myself, as I opened the first letter and read, with a pang, that Mrs. Lambert, Warwick Crescent, had concluded to employ a governess in the house,

and consequently would not need my services as French and music teacher to her three daughters.

This was a great loss to me, and I remember a feeling of cold and almost longer as I mechanically opened the second, and read that Mrs. Lennox, High Street, Kensington, was going abroad for the winter with her daughters, and would not need me until spring, when she should be glad to employ me again if my time was not fully occupied.

"Fully occupied," I said, bitterly. "Small danger of that. I shall starve at this rate, and in a hopeless, despairing kind of way."

I opened the third and last letter and read that Lady Fenton, No. —, Grosvenor Square, would like me to call at once if I cared for another scholar, as she might wish to put her little daughter, Maude, under my instruction.

The note was dated more than two weeks back, and the call at once was understood as if the summons admitted no delay.

"Lost that chance, too," I said, as I studied the small, delicate handwriting, and wondered where I had seen it before, or a handwriting like it.

I could not tell, but somehow my thoughts went back to that summer afternoon twelve years ago, and the breezy hall, with the doors opened wide, the sweet-scented air, and the tall, dark boy placing the white rose in my hair and bidding me keep it till he came back.

I had put the rose between the leaves of a heavy book that night, and when, weeks afterward, I found it there I had laid it away in a little Japanese box with a lock of Archie's bright brown hair cut for me from his dead brow by Lady Darinda's hand, and one of Tom's sandy curls cut out by himself with a jack-knife, and given me on one of my birthdays.

That was twelve years in the past, and everything was so changed, and I was so dead, so poor, and lonely as I recalled it all, and thought first of Archie dead, then of the father dead also, and the money gone, and then of Tom, who had been so much to me, once, and who seemed of late to have forgotten me entirely, for I had not heard from him since July, when he wrote, asking for my photograph, and bidding me to be sure and send it, as he wished to know how "the little old mother looked after a dozen years."

That was what he called me, "little old mother," the name he gave me long ago when I used to lecture him so soundly and call him a "naughty boy." He had asked me in the letter if I did not want some money, saying: "If I did he wished I would tell him so frankly, and it should be forthcoming to my amount. I did not want money from him, he was too much a stranger to me now to admit of that, but I had sent him a photograph, which the Misses Keith had pronounced excellent, but which I thought younger, fairer, and better-looking than the face I knew as mine. Still, such as it was, I sent it to Tom and thanked him for offering me money, and said I did not want it, and told him of my projected trip to Switzerland with some friends, and asked him to write to me again, as I was always glad to hear from him. But he had not written me a line, and it was almost four months now since I sent him the photograph.

"He was probably disappointed and disgusted with the picture, and so has ceased to think of or care for me," I said, and notwithstanding my newly renovated room, which an hour before I thought so bright and cheerful, I do not remember I had ever felt so lonely, and miserable, and forsaken as I did that night when I sat thinking of Tom and listening to the rain which he had commanded to fall heavily, and was beating against the shutters of the room.

How long I sat there I do not know, but the house was perfectly quiet, and the fire was burned out, when at last I undressed myself and crept shivering to bed.

(To be continued.)

STRATAGEM.—Every one wrote speeches when they were first introduced. In Spain they format part of the substance of every well-bred person. Glasses were meant to increase the gravity of the appearance, and consequently the veneration with which the wearer of them was regarded. The glasses of apostrophes were proportioned in size to the rank of the wearer. Those worn by the Spanish nobles were as large as one's hand.

THE DRY-DRAWER.—The mind as well as the body the girl differs from the boy. His pastimes are ephemeral; hers are perpetual. The boy, becoming a man, will put away his balls and marbles; but the girl's chief playthings, in new developments, will always engage her heart. For what, in fact, is her staple amusement but maternity in prospect? Her housekeeping instinct dominates and delights in her baby-house, and she will one day devote herself to her real babies as she now gives her heart and hands to her dolls. Thus early do the sexes select them-

selves; thus early do they show instinctively and unconsciously that "man's job is of man's life a thing apart," his woman's whole existence; for the blind intuition of the maternal tenderness, stirred into action by imitativeness of mamma herself, underlies the one passion which is the serious parent of every little girl's life. Her other toys and games are mere incidentals; her doll is, as her child will be, at once her comfort and her care.

THE FAIR CANVASSER.

We were standing upon the deck of a steamer, one bright October morning—my friend Richard Raymond and I—as she stopped to take in the few passengers who were waiting upon the wharf.

Not caring to land, we stood leaning over the rail, watching them as they came on board, as well as the hurried movements of the men who had the work to do, listening to their shouts, and of best looking at beyond them upon the pleasant landscape.

We had just been talking about the peculiarities of a fashionable and aristocratic pleasure party who were on board the boat, and whose exhibitions of haughty, silliness and polite insolence, for the last day or two, had been simply ridiculous. They were dressed in the extreme of fashion, with quite a vulgar display of costly jewellery, and evidently felt that all plain or ill-dressed people were far beneath them in the social scale. They had been extremely polite to my friend, whom they knew to be a man of wealth, as well as a popular lecturer, though they had not, it seemed, impressed him very favourably.

"I tell you what it is, Mark," he said, with his expressive lip curling in a cynical way, "the race of noble women, like your mother and mine, is all dying out. Helplessness, extravagance, and other worthlessness are the order of the day with the women of the present generation. If we are not extremely careful the race will soon get back to Darwin's monkeys. In spring every new-fangled fashion, folly and extravagance, they will soon become nothing but apes themselves."

I laughed at this girlish young feminine folly, which was indeed nothing new with Richard Raymond; but I did not try to combat it, as I thought over a story I had heard of his once admiring and as last being filled by a fashionable beauty. That, if true, might account for his bitterness and lack of faith in the women of the age in which he lived.

But while we talked the men below us worked until the coal, passengers and freight were all on board, and they were getting up steam to depart.

Just at this moment a lumbering old waggon, drawn by a pair of lame horses, came thundering down to the wharf. It contained a tall, stalwart man, two women, and a boy some ten or twelve years of age.

Seeing that they were late, the people were on upon the wharf in a moment, lurching out trunks and baggage, while the sailors, who were just ready to draw the gang-plank, grumbled at the delay the captain ordered while the party were getting on board.

There was a small, elderly woman, with a fair, colourless, shabby complexion, pleasant black eyes, and very decided Roman features, who seemed to be an invalid, attended by a younger one, with very similar features, whose movements were quick, active and energetic, and who seemed to be the life and soul of the little company. She had a dark yet clear complexion, lively brown eyes, and her hair, of a bright, reddish-golden tint, was put plainly back from a broad and ample forehead. Her brown clip hat was ornamented by a plain velvet band, and the travelling apparel of both ladies, though of good material and in respectable fashion, was perfectly plain, and destitute of fuffes, fluffs, or furbelows of any kind.

With a keen glance around, the girl seemed instinctively to comprehend their position, and, putting her lips close to the elder lady's ear, she said, in a clear, but not very loud tone:

"Anat Fanny, the boat is all ready to start. We must get on board instantly."

And, throwing two heavy blanket shawls over her arm, she took the old lady's hand and led her across the gang-plank just as soon as she had laid the things left behind a tremulous "good-bye."

Setting down Anat Fanny with the baggage she ran back with all speed to look after the heavy trunks that were still lying upon the wharf where she had left them, with the man still standing beside them.

"Will some of you please put these trunks on board the boat?" she said to those who were standing around the gangway.

The men stared at her, and then at the tall man standing idly by the trunks, and did not move a hair.

They were crumbly and ill-pleased at the detention, and the officers happening just then to be out of hearing they virtually though silently refused her request.

The girl looked anxiously and questioningly into the grim faces for a moment, and then an angry frown swept over her own as she stepped determinedly upon the wharf.

"Here, Ben," she exclaimed to the boy who was holding the horses, "you are a stout little man, if you will help me, I think we can manage the trunks. Your father will take the reins, and you shall have the porter's fee."

The boy laughed merrily as he stepped forward, and put the reins in his father's hand.

"I wish I were going with you, Cobain Mary, and I'd gladly play portier for nothing all the way," he said, as he took hold of one end of a heavy trunk. The young lady took hold of the other end, and by their united strength they managed to drag it on board the boat, while the faces of both grew red with the unusual exertion.

"That is really shameful," exclaimed Raymond, angrily, as he surveyed the scene, and saw the rude and insolent bearing of those whose duty it was to care for the baggage. The next I know he was rushing downstairs, and out upon the wharf. He was just in time to catch the reckless girl in getting the last trunk on board.

"I am very much obliged, sir," she said, as she looked up shyly but gratefully in his friendly face. "The trunk is full of books, and very heavy, and that was the reason Ben and I could not lift it up on the plank. We are pretty courageous, but not very strong, it seems," she continued between smiles and tears.

"Why didn't your big burly man there take hold, though?" exclaimed one of the boatmen, roughly and rudely.

"Because he is ill and stone blind," said the girl, looking at him pitifully, then she went back to him and help him into the waggons, but did him no affectionate "Good-bye," and gave him but a passing hug and message to his mother.

"Oh!" exclaimed all the men in a breath, as they received the explanation; and when the girl came back over the plank, with her eyes filled with tears, more than one, with flushed but manly faces, begged pardon for their rude, unmanly behaviour. It was readily accorded, and as soon as she found Aunt Fanny, the two ladies, with the shawls, disappeared for a time from the scene.

"Well, Raymond," said I, smiling at his silent absorption, as he came on deck and stood beside me once more, "I see you have found her at last?"

"Who do you mean?"

"Why a woman who is capable and energetic, like your mother and mine, and in a case of necessity not above helping herself."

"Ay! and didn't she do it bravely? Most girls would have fainted at the situation, and never dreamed of helping themselves. But these rude fellows deserve a striking for their insolence."

"Yes. But you ought to thank them for giving you the chance to show your gallantry to a sensible looking woman."

"Perhaps," said he, dreamily, as he gazed with an interested look upon the distant landscape. Then, after a pause, "Did you notice, Mark, what fine eyes she had—and what a splendid form, and fair, intellectual brow?"

"Yes, and how plainly she was dressed."

"In good taste though, if she is what I suppose."

"What is that?"

"Either a school teacher or book agent."

"You rate her low then. Of course, yes, with all your wealth and aristocratic pride, could not descend to that?"

"Would it be descending if she were a good and noble girl, trying to help her friends or herself? I love not."

At dinner, strongly enough, we got seated just opposite Aunt Fanny and her niece, without the least previous intention on the part of either. They were already seated at the table, and as the young lady looked up when we sat down her face was as once suffused with smiles and blushes, and she and Raymond bowed simultaneously—a pleased and smiling recognition.

We waited for no other introduction than the courtesies of the table gave us, and very soon glided into a general conversation with those around us, in which the two ladies took a small but noticeable part. The meal passed off satisfactorily, and just as we were leaving the table Raymond managed to say to the young lady, whose side he had gained, as we were leaving the cabin:

"I was really ashamed of the rudeness with which you were treated this morning."

"And I felt hurt by it until I knew the cause. When I did I could not blame them. My cousin

does not show his blindness and ill-health like some, so all the more do I owe thanks to you, sir. Aunt Fanny, this is the gentleman who so kindly assisted me in getting the trunks on board," she whispered in the old lady's ear.

"Indeed!" she echoed. "Well, if that is the case I too must thank him, and would like to know his name."

"It is Richard Raymond," he said, smiling, as he took the hand she offered. "The service was too trifling to speak of, madam, except as it gives me the pleasure of your acquaintance."

The old lady was very deaf, but somehow Raymond's deep, cultivated and melodious tones seemed to find the way to her understanding and unlock the reserve with which she treated every one else but him, and afterwards her friends and companions. Before the day was over Raymond found that Miss Fanny Waldron had been a friend and confidante of his mother in their early days, and she discovered that he was Pauline Raymond's son, whom she had never seen, but of whom in his boyhood she had often heard in the letters of his departed mother—long since gone to her rest. She did not know that my friend had quitted the farm, however, or that he had speculated until he had made a fortune, and that he was now in gold and houses and lands, if not in faith in women, and richer still in the possession of a kindly heart, a generous soul and highly cultivated intellect.

From this time our acquaintance progressed rapidly, in spite of the evening remarks of the fashionable party on board, who felt as if the Hon. Mr. Raymond was lowering his dignity immensely in noticing as he did, and would in spite of them, the pretty book-agent—as they had found out that she really was—in her plain and homely dress, and with her unpretentious manners.

They had come to Shelbourne, we found, the previous year, the aunt on account of failing health, and the niece to teach school. But the close air of the school-room did not agree with the niece's constitution or the climate with that of Aunt Fanny. So Mary took a book agency for a change, and was doing well, when her aunt's rapidly failing health made it necessary for them to return with all speed to England.

"I felt very sorry to take Mary away from her business when she was doing so well," said Aunt Fanny, confidentially, to Raymond, after she found out who he was; "for I know she was trying to pay up the mortgage upon the old homestead, to which we are returning. For you must know that her father, who is my brother, is one who is too generous and uncalculating ever to make the ends meet. His only son has gone abroad, and the help he gave him, and for which he became involved, has been like a millstone upon his neck ever since. It worried him so that Mary, the eldest daughter, determined to see what she could do to raise the burden. And she has really paid the interest on the debt for two years, and was beginning to pay the principal when my unfortunate illness broke up all her plans for the future. I regretted it exceedingly, she was succeeding so splendidly; but there was no one else to go with me, and I could not go alone. And would you believe it, the dear child insists upon paying my expenses out of her own pocket, and I let her do it. Ay! I let her do it to see what stuff she is made of, and I find it mind and tender, and true as steel. She thinks I am poor, I have been an invalid so long, and that my native air will restore me. But she is mistaken. I have more than enough to last me, and she shall have nothing by her kindness to her dear old aunt, her care and toil for the dear friends at home. For I know that my time is almost up, and that I am going home to die. Then the burden will be lifted from the farm without Mary's help, and she can go back to her business or remain at the old home in peace."

"Or make glad a beautiful home of her own," Raymond could not help adding.

"I don't know about that," and the old lady looked on lovingly, with eyes full of tears, to where the girl was standing leaning over the railings, lost in mournful reverie. "I think she has now in prospect at present. To tell you the truth Mr. Raymond, Mary is rather peculiar in her notions. She seriously grieved her friends by refusing a splendid offer just before she came from home. They said she had read so many novels that her head was full of romance and all sorts of unreal dreams of life, and that the time would come when she would deeply regret her decision."

"And what did she say?" he asked, eagerly.

"Well, I think Mary took after her old maiden aunt in her ideas more than her mother," laughed Aunt Fanny. "She said she did not love the man; that she would not marry the best man in the country unless she loved him, and that she preferred to a marriage of expediency."

"Ay! Well, I admire her spirit—and herself too," he added, mentally, as the girl came towards them to help her aunt (who grew feebler every day) back to their room, where she spent much of her time.

As we, too, were going to England, it was very convenient to pay the ladies those little attentions that saved them from further annoyance, and for which they seemed grateful; and I must confess that we both of us tried to make ourselves agreeable to aunt and niece.

"What do you think of her, Mark?" said Raymond to me one day, just as we were drawing near the end of the journey.

"Which do you mean, the aunt or niece?" said I, maliciously.

"The niece, of course," he returned with a conscious flush.

"That I wish you did not stand in my way, Raymond."

"Indeed!" and he looked up at me with a quick, surprised, searching glance, as if he would read my heart. "Is that so?"

"It is; but you needn't be alarmed. She is evidently a well-educated, intelligent, noble-souled girl, whom I admire and fully appreciate, but you need not fear that I shall rival you."

"Your claim to be as good as mine, Mark. That I love her as I never loved woman before I will not deny, but if she is more partial to you than to me, as I fully believe, she shall never know it from me," and his tones were low and tremulous from emotion.

"Richard," said I, "are you bluffed? A child could see how much higher she regards you than me. You won her gratitude by your kindness before ever she saw me, and there is but a step between gratitude and love. Your eloquent tongue and helpful hand has won for you a noble heart, I believe. I would give a great deal to be able to bring such a sparkle to her eye and flash to her cheek every time you come suddenly into view, or to have her treat me with the sweet, shy reserve with which she receives all your attentions. With me and every one else she is perfectly frank and unaffected. Don't you see?"

"I never thought of it in that light before," he said, with his face lighting up with a radiant smile. "But we must part to-morrow as strangers part," he sighed.

"Not unless you wish it, Richard, or are you a lunatic. But then I really was forgetting what I once heard a friend of mine say," said I, maliciously.

"What is that?"

"That bookagents were a perfect nuisance, and the female ones especially horrid and disgusting."

"Circumstances alter cases," he returned, laughing and blushing. "I begin to think 'conquering' a fine accomplishment to perfect a bashful girl's education, and make her easy in manner, graceful in carriage, and self-reliant in character."

"Then I expect you'll do, and I wish you joy in advance."

At the journey's end we met the young lady's father, a plain, sensible-looking old farmer, delivered our charges into his hands, and bade them "good-bye," and soon afterward I parted with Raymond.

I know there had been no declaration or explanations, and I wondered how the affair would end. I was enlightened, however, a few months later by receiving cards of invitation to the wedding of Richard Raymond and sweet Mary Waldron.

I accepted it with a little twinge at the heart-strings, for I longed to see the pretty canvasser once more; but when I arrived at the new old country homestead I found another, younger, and, to me, fairer little Waldron, who drove all other previous fancies out of my head.

She was first bridesmaid, and I was her chosen attendant upon that memorable occasion—but a few months later she became my own beloved and honoured bride.

Aunt Fanny soon went up to a happier home than those of earth, but the memory of her is still sweet in more than one of those earthly mansions, where the broken plans of a female canvasser and the journey home are often referred to as the links in the chain of circumstances that brought a life-long happiness to four loving hearts. M. A. A.

SIR WILLIAM HENRY LUGAN, the distinguished geologist, died recently at the age of seventy-seven years.

BARINGS.—According to the Mahomedans, Abraham invented the practice of circumcising. In one of Sarah's jealous fits respecting Hagar she said that she would not rest until she had dipped her hands in Hagar's blood. In order to quiet Sarah and enable her to redeem her promise without further upsetting her household, Abraham pierced Hagar's ears and drew rings through them. From that time ear-rings became the fashion.



[FORGET-ME-NOT.]

FLOWERS: THEIR LANGUAGE, SENTIMENT, SYMBOLS AND INTERPRETATION.

BY PHILANTHOS.

VOCABULARY.

FLAX-LEAVED GOLDY-LOCKS. (*Linosyris vulgaris*.)
Tardiness. Laziness.

This plant in its wild state is found upon limestone rocks and chalky downs, growing about a foot high, with erect stems, bearing yellow flowers at their summits. Its leaves are narrow, like Flax, whence its name, and when squeezed in the hand emit a fragrant smell. Its old name "Chrysocoma" is the same as ours, Golden-locks, and the French name is "Criscome," the Germans "Das Goldhaar" and the Italians "Criscoma." Yellow hair in the olden times taken as the rustic simpleton's or ploughboy's colour, was considered to denote a slow and lazy temperament.

FLEUR-DE-LYS. FLOWER-DE-LUCE. (*Iris* and *Iris Pseud-acorus*.—See *Iris*.)

The common vocabularies give under F., Fleur-de-Lys, with the interpretation of "Flame," "I burn;" and also Fleur-de-Luce, with "Fire" as its meaning. This curious "distinction without a difference," is, as Lord Dundreary says, "a thing no fellow can possibly understand." Now as the Fleur-de-Luce, or Fleur-de-Lys, is neither more nor less than our well known *Iris*, and as that already symbolizes *Iris*, messenger of the gods, and is appropriated to "Message" or "Announcement," I propose to strike out Fleur-de-Lys, vice *Iris*, and refer the reader to letter I. for my explanation.

FLOWERING FERN. (*Osmunda Regalis*.—See *Osmunda*.)

FLOWERING REED, or FLOWERING RUSH. (*Butomus umbellatus*.) Trust, or Confidence in Heaven.

The Flowering Rush is the only plant of its botanical class and order which grows in England. It is remarkable for its sword-shaped leaves and conspicuous flowers in different shades of red and purple, and we have seen it entirely rose-coloured and also white.

It is a tall aquatic plant, not uncommon in stagnant ponds and slow rivers, and its flowers grow in a simple umbel (whence its second name *umbellatus*) expanding from July to September. Its botanical title "*Butomus*" is from the Greek "*boas*," an ox, and "*temno*," to cut, cattle feeding on its leaves being liable to cut their mouths. Young folks who may be experimentally curious on such points are warned that they may cut their fingers and thumbs at the shortest notice by handling the leaves of the *Butomus*. Miss Pirie says it grows in Duddington Loch near Edinburgh. It is sometimes called the Water Gladiolus, and deserves the name.

The grateful earth her odour yields,
In homage, Mighty One, to thee,
From herbs and flowers in all the fields,
From fruit on every tree;
The balmy dew at morn and even
Seems like the penitential tear
Shed only in the sight of Heaven—
All nature worships here!

And the Flowering Rush, which perishes in drought,
Speaks to us of "Confidence in Heaven."

FLY ORCHIS. Error.—See *Orchis*.

FLY-TRAP. Decoit.

FOOL'S PARSLEY. (*Ethusa Cynapium*.) Silliness.
Weak Simplicity.

In its young state this slender plant, which grows to about a foot in height, somewhat resembles parsley, but when in flower in July or August, may be readily distinguished from that and all other umbelliferous plants by having no bracts, but three very long narrow leaves at the base of each umbel, on the

outer side, pointing downwards. It is called by some "Lesser Hemlock," which plant it also resembles in its white flowers. It is a common weed in many gardens, and is certainly poisonous. Its leaves are smoother, of a shiny green, more drooping and acuter than the true parsley, and have an unpleasant garlic-like smell if crushed or bruised. If you should eat any of this plant by mistake, take two or three grains of tartarized antimony, and after the emetic drink freely of lemonade.

FORGET-ME-NOT. (*Myosotis palustris*.) Forget-me-not.—See *Speedwell* and *Veronica*.

There is a little modest flower
To friendship ever dear,
'Tis nourished in her humble bower,
And watered by her tear.

If hearts by fond affection tied
Should chance to slip away,
This little flower will gently chide
The love that thus could stray.

All other flowers when once they fade
Are left alone to die,
But this 'e'en when its bloom's decayed,
Will live in memory's sigh.

The Water-scorpion-grass borrows its scientific name from two Greek words signifying "mouse" and "ear," from the shape of its leaves; its English name we shall have more to say about hereafter.

The pale blue enamel star-like flowers, each with its golden eye, and a small white ray at its base, have always called forth admiration. Its stem and leaves are of a bright green and its little buds, which before expanding are pink and form a little bunch at the top of the flower-stalk have given it the name of *Scorpiogras*. The place of its growth as a "wild-flower" is indicated in its second name "*palustris*" ("of a lake," or "pool,") but the legendary story, as we shall presently see, takes us to the river-side.

The habitat of the Forget-me-not is prettily described by the poet:—

Swift dragon-flies with their gauzy wings
Flit glistening to and fro;
And murmuring hosts of moving things
O'er the waters gleam and glow:

There are spots where nestle wild-flowers small,
With many a mingling gleam;
Where the broad flag waves, and the bulrush tall,
Nods still to the thrusting stream;

The Forget-me-not on the water's edge
Reveals her lovely hue;
Where the broken bank beneath the sedge
Is embroidered with her blue.

Coleridge, who has written some pretty lines which we shall presently quote, says that the flower has the same name all over Germany, Denmark and Sweden—"Vergiss, mein nicht;" though the French call it "*Oreille de rat*," and the Spaniards "*Miosota*," the *Myosotis*, already explained. Mill, in his "*History of Chivalry*," tells the legend to which it owes its name.

A knight and his lady-love wandered by the river-side, and the lady while looking at the clear waters espied the bright blue-flowers and desired her adorer to gather them. They were in a place hard to come at, but this rendered the woman's desire the stronger, and the knight's resolution to procure them more determined. He plunged into the stream and was carried away by its force, but by a last supreme effort cast the dearly earned flowerets on the shore at his lady's feet, and, with the words "Forget me not!" on his dying lips, disappeared beneath the waters.

Bishop Mant, Miss Pickersgill, and other poets have versified this legend with slight variations. The bishop's poem is somewhat too long for extract in its entirety, as are also two other versions of the legend now before us. Its last stanza will show its construction:—

And the lady fair of the knight so true
Still remembered his hapless lot,
And she cherished the flower of brilliant hue,
And she braided her hair with its blossoms blue,
And she called it—"Forget-me-not!"

In another poem, by an anonymous author, in the "*British Anthology*," the fame of the lady is cleared of the stain of setting her lover an exacting and fatal task. It combines the legend in the form told by Miss Strickland in her "*Lives of the Queens of England*" and that given in Mill and "*The Bride of the Danube*." Miss Strickland's, which is not less poetical and doubtless more authentic, runs as follows:—

"The royal adventurer, the banished and aspiring Henry of Lancaster, appears to have been the person who gave to the *Myosotis* its emblematical and poeti-

cal meaning by uniting it, at the period of his exile, on his collar of SS with the initial letter of his 'moy', or watchword, which was 'Souverain-vous de moy'. Thus rendering it the Symbol of Remembrance, and, like the subsequent fatal roses of York and Lancaster, that of the Stuarts, the lily of the Bourbons, and the violet of Napoleon, an historical flower. Few of those who at parting exchange this simple, touching appeal to memory are aware of the fact that it was first used as such by a royal Plantagenet prince, who was, perhaps, greatly indebted to this little mystic blossom for the crown of England. It was with his hostess, at that time wife of the Duke of Bretagne, that Henry of Lancaster exchanged 'this token' of good will and remembrance.

An emblem true thou art
Of love's enduring lustre, given
To cheer the lonely heart.

In the poem of the anonymous author alluded to above the introductory stanzas describe a lady as decorating her knight's crest with the Forget-me-not as a "token-flower."

Farewell I may true, my loyal knight! on yonder battle-field,
Many a pearl and gem of price will gleam on helm and shield;
But bear thou on thy morion's crest this pure and simple wreath
A token of thy lady's love—unchanging to the death.
They seem, I know, these humble flowers, these fairy stars of blue,
As maiden's eyes had smiled on them, and given them that bright hue;
As only fitting but to bind a lady's hair or lute,
And not with war or warrior's crest in armed field to suit.

But there's a charm in every leaf, a deep and mystic spell;
Then take the wreath, my loyal knight, Our Lady shield thee well;
And though a prouder flower deck the gallant knights of France
Be thou the first in every field "La Fleur de Souverain!"

Miss Pickering's poem, "The Bride of the Danube," tells the olden legend with a variation.

BERTHA, "the bride," loquiter:

"See how yon glittering river in sportive play,
Washes the bank and steals those flowers away;
And must they thus in bloom and beauty die,
Without the passing tribute of a sigh?"

"No Bertha: those young flow'ers fair
Shall form a braid for thy sunny hair,
I yet will save them, if but one
Soft smile reward me when 'tis done."
He said, and plunged into the stream,
His only light was the moon's pale beams.
"Stay! stay!" she cried—but he had caught
The floating flowers, and breathless sought
To place his treasures at the feet
Of her for whom e'en death was sweet.

Still through the surge he panted strove to gain
The welcome strand—but, ah! he strove in vain,
Yet once the false stream bore him to the spot
Where stood his bride in muteness of despair;
And scarcely had he cried "Forget me not!"
And flung the dearly ransomed flowerets there,
When the dark wave closed o'er him, and no more
Was seen young Rodolph on the Danube's shore.

And oft at eve, when maidens rove
Beside the Danube's wave,
They tell the tale of hapless love
And show young Rodolph's grave,
And cull the flowers from that lone spot,
Still calling them "Forget-me-not."

D. M. Moir, the "Deltis" of "Blackwood's Magazine," has also a graceful little poem to the Forget-me-not in his collected works, as also has W. H. Harrison; indeed the subject has been such a favourite one with verse-writers that selection rather than collection of their pretty sayings has been my task. I cannot, however, omit one little transatlantic effusion which shows that the New World has welcomed this graceful Symbol of Constancy with the same feelings as the old:—

WITH A SPRAY OF FORGET-ME-NOTS.

Dear girl, I send this spray of flowers—
All withered now, once brightest blue—
To call to mind those happy hours,
Those happy hours I passed with you.
Forget me not! though others win
The glorious right to call thee "theirs."
Forget me not! that might have been
The answer to my fervent prayers.

But I have had thy hand in mine,
And once our ways in life seemed blended;
And once I thought our loves might twine,
But now alas! that dream is ended.
Forget me not! for I am lonely,
And stranded on life's desert shore:
Forget me not! I ask that only;
For now our paths may meet no more.
Could I but think you'll ne'er forget
Though all my hopes of life should perish,
I'd part them all without regret.
So that fond thought I still might cherish,
Forget me not! 'tis all I ask,
And though thy hand may be another's,
I'll wear upon my face a mask
Of smiles, to hide the grief it covers.

Let then these withered flowers recall
One broken link in memory's chain,
And from the past's dim, haunted hall
Bring back those happy hours again.
Forget me not! mine only love—
Ah, would indeed that thou wert mine!
Forget me not! my long-lost dove;
In dreams my heart will beat to thine.

In the month of July, and yet earlier in a shady and moist garden nook, the Myosotis may be had in great beauty. I have two large and brilliant clumps at the foot of an old apple-tree the stem of which is surrounded by a circular mound of violets and the Ajuga reptans, or Common Bugle (Comfrey); it may also be grown in pots when kept well watered; but it is by no means so pretty or free-growing as in the open earth. If you wish to cultivate dwarf pot-plants of this charming little weed, you may strike cuttings in a gentle bottom heat in early spring, selecting for the purpose terminal shoots, giving as much light and air as possible and never forgetting plenty of water. The gardeners-round Paris drive a good trade in the Myosotis as a market-flower, and also grow the Myosotis sylvatica, a variety which will thrive in a drier situation than the M. palustris. Yet our heart turns to the wild-flower, the child of nature, of which Coleridge complains, in sultry August:—

Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk,
By rivulet or spring or wet road-side,
The blue and bright-eyed flow'et of the brook,
Hope's gentle gem! the sweet Forget-me-not.

The old herbalists commend a syrup of the Myosotis in pulmonary affections, and in Germany sword cutters are said to have made their steel weapons so extraordinarily hard by quenching them in an extract of the juice of the Myosotis that they would cut pieces of iron tempered in the ordinary way, which I beg leave to question.

To be continued.

THAT BABY.

Mrs Osgood was a frail, delicate woman. She worked all the forenoon about the house; keeping every nook of it spotlessly neat, and getting a dinner which made every neighbour who happened to come in at dinner-time smack his lips and say, "What a good cook Osgood's wife is!" But by the time all was done, and the dishes were washed after her noonday meal, Mrs. Osgood was well nigh "done" too. She had no strength left, and little patience. At such times a grasshopper was a burden—how much more a baby! But those were the very times little Sammy took in which to make his presence most sensibly felt. Jenny Osgood was ten years old when Sammy was born. During these ten years between there had been no baby, and when Sammy made his appearance his parents were divided between surprise and satisfaction.

Jenny was all satisfaction at first. She had always envied other girls their baby brothers and sisters, with their odd little fingers and wonderful pink toes, and now she had a little natural curiosity in her own house, as pink, as small, and as astonishing as the best of them. But when the nurse went away, and Mrs. Osgood began to do her old tasks again, with the care of baby added, then Jenny's troubles began. When she came in at noon it was "Jenny, won't you take the baby while I get the dinner on?" When she came home at night it was "Oh, you've come, Jenny; I'm glad, for I want you to take the baby and let me rest a little—my head is bursting!"

Jenny remarked, confidentially, to her best friend, Susy Pine, that it was always that baby, and she believed if he was going to be a baby always she should hate him, but she supposed he would grow up some day.

Meantime Sammy was an engaging little creature. He was never very strong—how should he be when his mother was so worn with care, and he drew in weariness with his milk? But he was a little blue-

eyed blossom of a baby, too fair for human use, and with a sort of uncanny wisdom in his face which Jenny never noticed, but which made older folks say they didn't believe that that Osgood baby would ever live to grow up.

He was slow about learning to walk, and when he was a year old Jenny had still to drag him in his little carriage. Sometimes she liked this well enough, for she was not a bad girl; only a little selfish, as girls of her age are so apt to be, and she truly loved her little brother.

But when he interfered with her own plans and pleasures she was sorely impatient with the hindrance. One noon-time in early May she was lying on her hat in the school-house entry. It was Saturday, and there would be no more school that day. The sweet spring air was swelling all the young buds to blossoming and all the young hearts to song and laughter.

The children were full of fun, bubbling over with the spring-time, that was as much awake in their hearts as it was in the babbling brooks and opening flowers and the young green on the rejoicing trees. Everybody was full of plans for the precious afternoon. Susy Pine came up to Jenny.

"As for us, let us go and get violets. I know where there are great banks of them. I'll come for you, and we'll get enough to fill cups and saucers. Will you?"

"Yes, indeed!" and then Jennie's face darkened, as an April sky does with a rising shower. "I don't know. There's always that baby. Mother's been baking to-day, and I suppose she's tired. Shouldn't wonder if her head ached ready to split. Well, you come round and see. If I can get away I will."

Jenny went home rather slowly. Somehow there wasn't so much spring in her heart as there had been before she thought of the baby, and of how hard it was that she could never make plans and promises as the rest did just because of him.

"Always that baby," she said to herself. "Anybody would think he was mine and not mother's by the way, I have to give up everything on his account."

When she entered the door with her not particularly cheerful face Sammy saw her. He was laboriously working himself across the room, after a fashion of his own, which was not creeping, but a sort of propelling himself across the floor, in a funny way at which Jenny often laughed, but at which she was in no humour to laugh now.

Sammy was as forward about talking as he was backward about other things, and he called out, gaily,

"Look, Jenny—see I go."

Jenny took no notice. She hung up her hat, and sat down listlessly by the window. Her mother was dishing up the beans, and was too busy to notice her. But Sammy, sensitive to atmospheres even then, as the sensitive plant which shrinks away from your kindest touch, felt that something was wrong with Jenny. At once he turned and began to propel himself in her direction, and presently pulled himself up at her knee.

"Sammy love 'oo," he said, earnestly, as if in that fact were consolation for all the ills of life. "Sammy 'say with 'oo."

There was a momentary impulse in Jenny's perverse heart to say:

"Yes, I know you will, and that's the worst."

But how could she with that little, earnest, flower-like face uplifted to hers? Instead, she stooped down and drew him up into her arms.

"You're a violet yourself," she cried, in a swift little passion of love and remorse. "I wouldn't give you for whole bowlfuls of them."

But by the time Susy Pine came in the afternoon she had grown a little bit discontented again. There was something not quite pleasant in the tone of her voice as she said:

"I suppose I can't go with Susy after Violets, can I?"

Mrs. Osgood was very sensitive to the moods of her household. It was from her that Sammy had taken his highly wrought nervous organization. She felt, now, all that Jenny's tone implied. She was very tired with her day's baking, and her head ached terribly. A few hours of rest would be so good, but she was not strong-minded and hard-natured enough to face Jenny's ill-humour for the sake of it. So she said, in a weary tone:

"Yes, you may go," and then an after-thought came. "Couldn't Jenny get her pleasure out of the afternoon and she herself get her rest? If only the girls would take Sammy! She asked, with a little hesitation: "I suppose you wouldn't want to put Sammy in his little chaise and draw him along too? The air would be good for him, and—"

She stopped there, but Jenny knew well enough that if her mother had finished the sentence it would have been "I am so tired."

To do the girl justice, she tried to speak cheerfully

and not show her reluctance at the proposed arrangement.

"Oh, yes," she said, "we'll take Sammy; he can come," and she hurriedly put on the little old-fashioned hat, and lifted the baby into his little chair. He was glad enough. He slapped his morose little hands together, and shouted—"If you could call such a weak little voice a shout!"

"Sammy come too—Sammy will play with Johnny." "Of course he will," said Susy Finn, making a mischievous little mouth, and Jenny half-smiled, half-pouted, and muttered, in a low voice, which only Susy could hear:

"Always that baby!"

For a time all went well. It was many enough to draw the little child in the nice path along the edge of the wood. There was plenty of violets, and the girl liked Sammy's lap with them. He seemed to love them in a curious way for such a baby. He would gather them up and kiss them, and lay them against his little heart, till the girls, watching him, cried out to each other:

"Was there ever such a lovely baby in this world?"

But presently it became very inconvenient to attend to him. They had gathered all the violets along the path, and they saw such beautiful great clumps of them a little way within the wood. If they could only leave Sammy for five minutes! The thought was in both their minds, but it was Jenny who spoke first.

"He's got all those violets to play with. I don't believe he would cry. Why should he?" Then she turned to Sammy. "Will Sammy be a good boy, and stay with these violets, while sister goes into the wood to get him some more?"

The little fellow gathered up the violets again, and kissed them.

"Sammy stay with these violets? Yes, Sammy stay with the violets."

Never stopping to think how improbable it was that the little fellow understood their intention, they took his words for the free consent an older person might have given, and so they hurried off into the wood. If he called after them, they did not hear the faint cry; and they ran on eagerly, gathering loads of flowers, and laughing and chatting, glad and merry "in their spring on that spring day." All right enough, if only duty, in the shape of poor little Sammy, had not been left behind.

They always thought they were not gone five minutes, but it was at least half an hour before they came in sight of Sammy again, and then he was not in the little chair. The violets lay there fading in the sun, but Sammy was on the ground, but that was such a white, white face on which the May sun was shining. The girls sprang toward him, but just as they reached him Jenny turned to Susy with such a look of pale despair as she hardly sees twice in a lifetime.

"You touch him, Susy," she gasped; "I dare not—I think he is dead!"

And Susy went to lift him up. At her touch he opened his eyes, with a feeble little wall; and then, seeing the girls, he tried to smile.

"Sammy wanted to come too—Sammy tell."

Then the blue eyes shut again, and the girls understood all. He had been frightened at being left alone, and he had tried to get out of the chair to drag himself after them. In that attempt he had fallen and hurt himself—who knew how badly? "Oh, Susy!" Jenny cried; "will you go and tell mother? I dare not, I'll wait here."

Kind-hearted Susy flew away like the wind, and Jenny sat down on the grass and drew the poor little sunny head, with the white, white, silent face, upon her knee.

When Susy reached the house she saw Mr. Os-good first. He had just come in, and was standing at the door. To him she painted forth her story, and he was off to the woods before she had finished it.

He found his children there—Sammy swooning from pain, and Jenny more dead than alive in her terror. He lifted the baby tenderly, and examined his poor, frail little body. He soon saw that it was an arm, which had been broken in the little Jenny's fall, that made the trouble. He spoke to Jenny cheerfully, for his heart was full of pity for her.

"It's a broken arm, dear, that can be set right by a surgeon and a few weeks of care, which you will be glad to help mother take, I know."

Then he carried Sammy, still unconscious, home in his arms. Mrs. Os-good had made all things ready. She was one of those women who find strength, not loss it, when a time of trial comes. She had sent Susy into the village for a physician. She had everything that could possibly be needed in waiting. Mr. Os-good laid Sammy down on his own little white, fresh bed.

"Don't take on, Jenny," he said to his wife. "He

has broken his little arm; but it will all come right."

Soon came the doctor, and confirmed what the father had said. The arm was set, and presently Sammy was looking round him, as comfortable in his mind as was possible to a broken-armed baby. Nobody scolded the girls, for they had suffered enough. It was a lesson they would never in all their lives forget.

The little arm healed fast, as baby limbs do. I think, even, that Sammy rather enjoyed this time of illness; for Jenny devoted herself to him constantly. She played with him, she sang to him, she told him stories. She never, never could do enough, she thought, to make up for having brought this pain and peril upon him by her selfish neglect. She was sure she could never forgive herself, but every one else who saw her sorrow and her devotion forgave her freely.

Sammy's arm was as good as new in a few weeks; and in the autumn he began to walk about. Jenny loved to watch him and help him, and pick him up when he fell down. But sometimes she used to say how soon he would be a boy and not a baby; and then there never would be a baby in the house any more. She thought the world rather took him for ever than have him grow beyond her tending. I think even his mother thought so too, sometimes, when she watched his smiling, cooing little ways, or laid the little head, with the soft curls of yellow hair and the fair, flower-like face, against her heart that soothed with the weight of its own tenderness. It seemed as if never any child was loved like that child. Until away from the love that surrounded him here he was uplifted to the larger love which should care for him for ever.

You know how difficult it was last winter among the little ones? Sammy was one of the first children to be stricken with it in the little town where he lived. A few hours of pain and pain, and then the everlasting rest. They mourned for him, all of us have mourned over little graves, but when he had been down a short time, they began to know that he had never gone away from them. Other people's children might grow out of their sweet babyhood to be rude boys, or hard men, but over their baby no change of age could come. Other people might not see him, but they saw him always—a little one for ever—with immortal sunshine on his ring of yellow hair, and a smile that carved constantly the soft sweetness of his mouth—always there in the old places, whatever else may change or pass away—always that baby.

FACETIA

A SHOWY GIRL.—A circus colombine.—Fun.

A SELF-ASSERTING though deprecatory motto for Kenaly.—"Ex Q.C. mot!"—Judy.

WHY does a drunken man become one of the Jewish persuasion?—Because he is in Hebrew-ated (in-cubitated).—Judy.

MEAN FOR THE WET WEATHER (against it comes again).—Obstacles and clouds are alike in one respect—they both hold the reins.—Judy.

"All the world's a stage." It is a musical stage. There are hundreds who blow their own trumpet, numbers who are obliged to stop small, and not a few who manage to fiddle away all their time!—Judy.

A CONVICTION was charged with having whipped cream. He said, in his defence, that it was only a trifling. An assessor must be to milk this! He ought to be beaten into a jelly.—Judy.

AUDS ATTEMPT PASTIME.—Why should the evidence of a constable in the X Division be received with diffidence?—Because it's an X party statement.—Fun.

THEY AND TISAL.—The Spiritualist announces the departure of a Dr. Test for America. This Dr. Test appears not to be the Doctor Test that "mediums" can never stand.—Punch.

SINGULAR.—The subjects of emutation, humation, basket coffins, etc., seem to be dropped by the newspapers. This is too bad. The very time for such subjects would seem naturally to be the dead season.—Judy.

"THE BROKEN EDUCATION."

"And what made the master fog you, Johnny?" "Cause, when 'e said I didn't know anything, I said 'twas a lie 'e could lick 'em at marbles—that's all!"—Fun.

HARROWING HUSBANDRY.—Sphyllas, who has been induced to give the children a blow on the briny, can't understand why he should be the object of so much attention when looking at Margate. And he so ill, too, poor man!

DANGEROUS PASTIME.—Drawing conclusions. A fellow nearly got his back broken the other day all through this. He chose to draw an unwarrantable one about a young lady whose big brother was

close by. He is at present being wheeled about in a Bath chair.

THE FUTURE OF BOWSVILLE.—Garnet (who meets the "Gutter Promises" one like "I") "But, Ben, down to bow of the chin web, eh?"

LAWYER: "Just so—just so; our long vacation, you see!"—Fun.

THE SEA, THE SEA, THE OPEN SEA.—"Of them as are the sea, the open sea!"—Fun.

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THE SEA, THE SEA, THE OPEN SEA.—"Of them as are the sea, the open sea!"—Fun.

SPOTLESS CHARACTER.—A notorious gentleman, who has been in jail, is reported to have said that he had left prison, after having served his sentence, without any stain on his character. Very likely. Some characters are of such a colour that they never show the dirt.—Punch.

WIT'S REFERENCE to sentences, it is useful to know what you can do and how much it will cost. You may bail a dog for twenty-one shillings, or skin a live cheep for forty. I shouldn't advise you to pick geraniums, but there are lots of other things you can do to while away a dull half hour.—Judy.

DRY WORK.

FAMER SON OF TON (to inquiring stranger): "Fust to th' right, matey!"

SKEGGS DO.: "No fit sin't, yer honour, it's the second, ole Buttercup!"

TILLER DO.: "What, ain't yer point 'o give us nothink for our trouble 'o 'o day like this?"—Fun.

MAMMA (to her eldest son): "My dear George, where are your manners? You should always say 'thank you' when anything is handed to you!"

GEORGE: "Oh, bother! having to say 'thanks' every time, ma! Can't a fellow have a season ticket?"—Punch.

"BROAD" ACRES.

LADY: "Well, Biddy, and how is this toothache this morning?"

BIDDY: "It's yourself's the rule lady to think of poor old Biddy; but sure, me lady, the pain's got so dreadful used to me, that I never feel it now at all, at all!"—Fun.

FLOWERS FOR THE SICK.—Children are employed in the neighbourhood of London to gather hampers of wild flowers, which are afterwards sent to the hospitals. The Home of Industry has sent a hundred bouquets in flower-holders, tastefully surrounded with appropriate texts, for the patients of Guy's Hospital. A speculator says that Guy's was a cheering and pleasant sight after one of those arrivals among the patients, some of whom seemed to enjoy new life from the freshness of the flowers.

AN AMBASSADOR.—Captain de Smythe incidentally beguiles the fair Laura and her sister to a certain secluded spot where, as he happens to know, his hated rival, Mr. Toukys, is in the habit of secretly practising on the bleary. He (Captain de S.) calculates that a mere glimpse of Mr. T., as he wobbles wildly by on that instrument, will be sufficient to dispel any illusions that the fair Laura may cherish in her bosom respecting that worthy man.—Punch.

RATHER TOO MUCH. (A FACT.)

Scene: The girls' room.—It is raining awfully. Charley, the good-natured brother, who fetches and carries in true retriever fashion, has been sent a couple of miles into the town to buy a packet of hat pins.

CHARLEY: "Well, here are the pins, but you didn't tell me whether you wanted them long or short, so I told the girl in the shop that, as the hair was long, I suppose the pins were to be long too, and—here they are!"—Fun.

ONCE knew a man who invented a thing like my umbrella, to come down from the roof of his house with. I said to him at the time, "Why come down off the roof of your house that way instead of by the staircase?" He said, "It's to save time." He was right in this. I never knew any one come down from the roof of a house any quicker. We buried his bits on the following Tuesday. There has been

another man in France who has invented another machine to come down from the roof by, and he asked a friend or two to come and see him do it. It was a dark night, and there was a lot of wind on, and just at the very moment he was going to come down a gust caught hold of him and his apparatus, and his friends along on the tops of their heads and said their prayers. But when the gust subsided, nothing more of the man and the apparatus was visible, and nothing has been heard of either of them since. It seems to me, if it's true, that that machine was really a good one. Not altogether satisfactory, so far as its owner was concerned, perhaps; but then he invented it, so he can't grumble.—*Judy.*

MATHEMATICS.—Algebra, dear, do explain to the man! You can do it so much better than I can!

PATRYMILLIAN.—“All right, my love,” (To attendant.) “Ecce, mon amant—I want you to teach my potty folks to swim—spread a net, you know. And look here—you mustn't keep them in the water more than fifteen seconds by the watch! Far ploer her kango savings dang I'm Comprossy!”—*Truism.*

THE MEAN OF LABOUR.—A woman named Mead, who enjoyed life as a button-hole maker, has been found dead in her bed from starvation. Considering that by exercising her profession she could make expenses in fourteen hours, she must be congratulated upon dying quietly between the rag. With her peculiar talent for making holes, we can only wonder that she didn't leave the linen in dignity, and practice upon the water.—*Fun.*

THE HOT MATHEMATICS.—A King has been sent to prison for a fortnight for assaulting an agricultural labourer. As the King is a question was a farmer, and not a colonel, and as his victim was a big man instead of a weak woman, the ruffian is to be denied the drawing-room floor and cheerful society which play so important a part in the British justice of 1875. Yet who shall say that his is a two week punishment? He might go farther and have worse.—*Fun.*

PROPER PRIDE.
My father was a Baron bold,
He dwelt beside the Rhine;
From crystal goblets chased with gold
He drank the German wine.
His trade was that of robber chief—
To make me one he tried;
But I would not become a thief,
For I had proper pride.

I came to London and began
(Falsifying faithful dreams)
To benefit my fellow man
By grand financial schemes.
I feathered carefully my nest
While all my efforts cried—
“For us he always does the best,
For he has proper pride.”
At length there came a day when all
My castles came to crash.
I'd speculated on the fall,
And seemed to wince to crash.
The orphan and the widow came,
And plaintively they sighed;
I sympathised with child and dame,
Displaying proper pride.

The day has passed, and they are gone
For ever from my view;
Another tack I'm sailing on—
I've shipped another crew.
As millionaire I churches build,
Fling bounty far and wide—
A peevish son my name will gild,
And prove my proper pride.—*Fun.*

FORGIVEN FROM JUDY.
Many a head-dresser's apprentice tries to pass himself off as a swell on Sunday, but you generally tell the real from the counterfeit gentleman.
Is there any connection between a horse-pital and an ass-yum?

An eye-opener—The Divorce Court!
The only mania we can tolerate for a moment this weather—Chocolate Menier.

Why is a after-do-weel like a favourite modern composer?—Because he is often back (Offenbach).
“Fly” papers—Sporting tips.
When is vocal in season?—When there is stuffing in it.—*Judy.*

A POEM.—In Scotland, they have narrow, open ditches, which they call sheep drains. A man was riding across a sheep pasture, but when the animal came to a sheep drain, he would not go over it. So the man rode him back a short distance, turned him round and applied the whip, thinking, of course, that the donkey, when going at the top of his

speed, would jump the drain before he knew. But not so. When the donkey got to the drain he stopped all of a sudden, and the man went over Mr. Neddy's head. No sooner had he touched the ground than he got up, and looking the best straight in the face, he said: “Vorra wool pitched; but then, how are ye gaird to get ower yerse!”

IT WAS A SLANDER.
A young fellow asked Mr. Bust if he could have his daughter, and Bust promised to give him an answer in the course of a few days. The truth was, he wished to inquire more into the private character of the youth who aspired to be his son-in-law, for of late he had heard some rather damaging stories regarding him. So he went to a man who knew him well, and asked him this question:
“Does Tom drink hard?”

“Drink hard?” asked the man, in astonishment.
“Yes, I have heard that he did,” said Bust.

“No, sir; it is a slander. I have often been out with him, and I am ready to swear that he does not drink hard. I never saw a man drink easier in my life.”

CREQUET.

Lister to the sound on the croquet-ground,
The quick, sharp meeting of the mallet and ball,
And a tossing of trees, and a murmuring of bees,
And wild, fresh laughter above them all.
Ah! there they are, drawn on the verdant old lawn,
The girls in white dainties, ribbons blue, red,
And the gay swells as neat in white duck suits
complete,
And merry of heart, if not weighty of head.

What a pretty girl that, with the rose in her hat,
Who carresses the ball with that trim foot of hers,
And aloft swings the mace with such petulant grace!

And then makes her hit, while her form hardly stirs!
And how plain to the eye that the young fellow nigh
Is her lover and slave! Why, his heart's in his eyes!

Ah! I think of a day and a game of croquet
In the far-away past, and the tears slowly rise.

Twas on such a green, but with lilacs between
The slope of the lawn and a stately old manse,
And a bright river near, and a sitting of deer
Through some palling beyond it, like shapes in a trance.

And—just like her there—with proud, petulant air,
Stood the queen of my heart, with her foot on the ball,

And the mace away aloft by a hand white and soft,
And I blushing near, like you fond, happy thrall.

How she won every game, and, still laughing the same,
She proudly averred 'twas because of her skill,
When she knew that each smile, word or glance
could beguile.

My hand and my heart of both purpose and will,
When she knew she could put on my neck her proud foot.

And find it more yielding than round ball of wood,
And with easier grace than she twirled the light mace.

Sway my strong, stubborn soul to her slightest mood!
The vision expands, and the two white little hands
Are once more in mine with a soft tremor placed,
And eyes sweet and brown are cast timidly down,
And my arm once again clasps a trim, shapely waist.

And again steal the words, like the low trill of birds,
Of “I love you! I love!”—But with such dreams
away!

For you fair party drawn far apart on the lawn,
Have ended, I notice, their game of croquet.

And you happy pair, whom I marked as so fair,
And so fond, and so loving, have now covered wide—

She vexed and aglow with a fresh-favoured brow,
He concealing his smart at another girl's side.

Some loves are always like a game of croquet,
Balls, and mallet, and players are all that are needed!

Those lovers, I trow, may be friends soon, but now
'Tis easy to see they have quarrelled, as we did.

N. D. U.

CURIOUS CUSTOMS.—According to the Oriental code of manners, the left hand, rather than the right, is the post of honour; so we should have to say of one whose presence is very essential to

another's convenience, “He is his left-hand man.” So of the adage, “Black as ink,” we must say in the East, “White as ink,” or “Black as a sheet of paper”—for paper is black, and the ink used for writing on it is either white or a clear, bright yellow. In very many Oriental countries white is the mourning colour, and European and American ladies are often asked, “Are all your friends dead, that you dress so frequently in white?” Yellow is the garb of the clergy, black is the colour worn for full dress; and the brightest crimson is deemed the appropriate colour of a bride's costume, flowers, favours, and all.

GEMS.

Men are sometimes tried by juries; but, alas! how much oftener by injuries.

Most of the shadows that cross our path through life are cast by our standing in our own light.

“Every tree is subject to a disease,” said a speaker in a fruit growers' convention. “What ailment can you find on an oak?” asked the chairman. “A-corn,” was the triumphant reply.

PLEASURE which cannot be obtained but by unreasonable or unsuitable expense must always end in pain; and pleasure which is acquired at the expense of another's pain can never be such as a worthy mind can delight in.

Remember the man that knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of the mischief of the world comes from the fact that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower, and spend no more labour on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO PREPARE FLOWERS.—Take a nice, clear bottle of glass if possible, filled with alcohol. Place the flower or flowers to be preserved in the liquid. After remaining three weeks, pour out the alcohol, which will have extracted all colour from the flower, and fill it with saw. Then seal it up and it will keep for years—the flowers looking like wax.

COCONUT FUDGE.—Mix a grated coconut with half a pound of powdered white sugar, add quarter of a pound of melted butter, beat up six eggs, leaving out half the whites, then mix grated nutmeg. Let all be well mixed. The dish to be lined with pie-crust of the following proportions: One pound of flour, three-quarters of a pound of butter, and a half pint of milk or water.

TO REMOVE MILDEW.—Make a very weak solution of chloride of lime in water (about a heaped up teaspoonful to a quart of water), strain it carefully, and dip the spot on the garment into it; and if the mildew does not disappear immediately, lay it in the sun for a few minutes, or dip it again into the lime-water. The work is effectually and speedily done, and the chloride of lime neither rots the cloth nor removes delicate colours when sufficiently diluted and the articles rinsed afterwards in clear water.

CHILLI-CORROW.—Take a peck of green tomatoes, slice two or three heads of cabbage (red pickling, if you can get it), cut them with a bread-cutter, put both in a wooden bowl, chop together, sprinkle salt through it and let it stand for several hours in press, pour off the liquid, put in an ounce each of cloves and stick cinnamon, cover with good vinegar, put in stone jars, set in a cool place, and it will keep for months.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Turkish Government, about a week ago, paid the last instalment, amounting to 400,000*l.* for 900 cast steel guns, into the hands of Herr Krupp, of Essen. The price is stated to be 1,000*l.* The Porte has also ordered a quantity of ammunition for the Krupp guns, for which it will pay 20*l.* a shot.

A LUXURIOUS FASHION.—Parisian say that they have had enough of the high-heeled boot fashion for ladies. They assert that it flings them too much forward, hurts the spine and reduces the size of the calf. The doctors recommend the reverse fashion, very low heels indeed, and high soles, for a time, so as to fling the body backward from the hips upward.

LIVING BAROMETERS.—Rain or wind may be expected when spiders shorten the last thread by which their webs are suspended, fair weather when they lengthen them, and the duration of either by the degree of contraction or expansion observable. When swallows sweep near the ground, rain is at hand; when they mount up, fine weather will follow. Rain is near when a single magpie leaves its nest, when peacocks, parrots and geese are uneasy.

